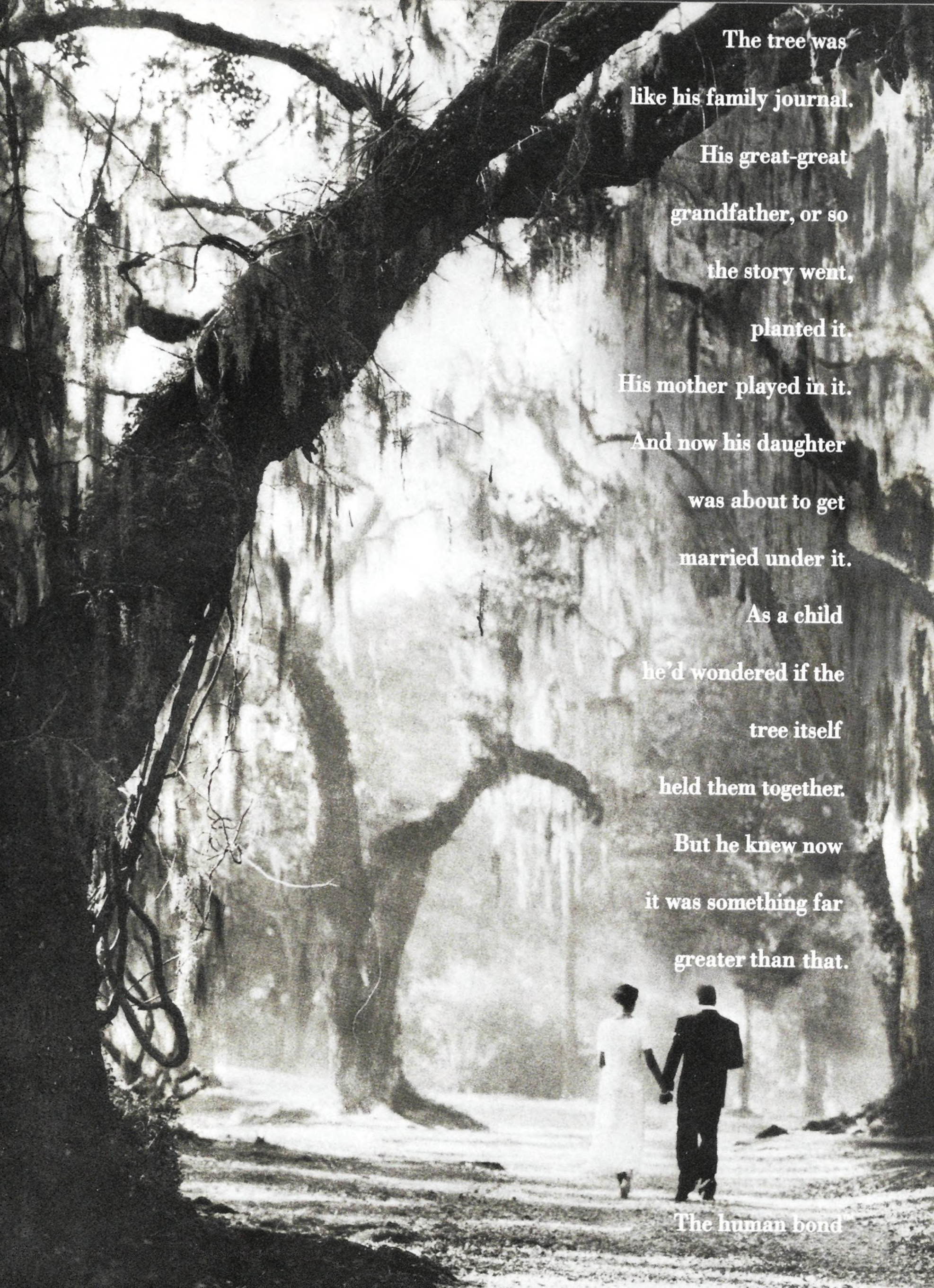
Smithsonian

July 1993

SCULPTURE ON WHEELS
(p. 50)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July 1993

Smithsonian

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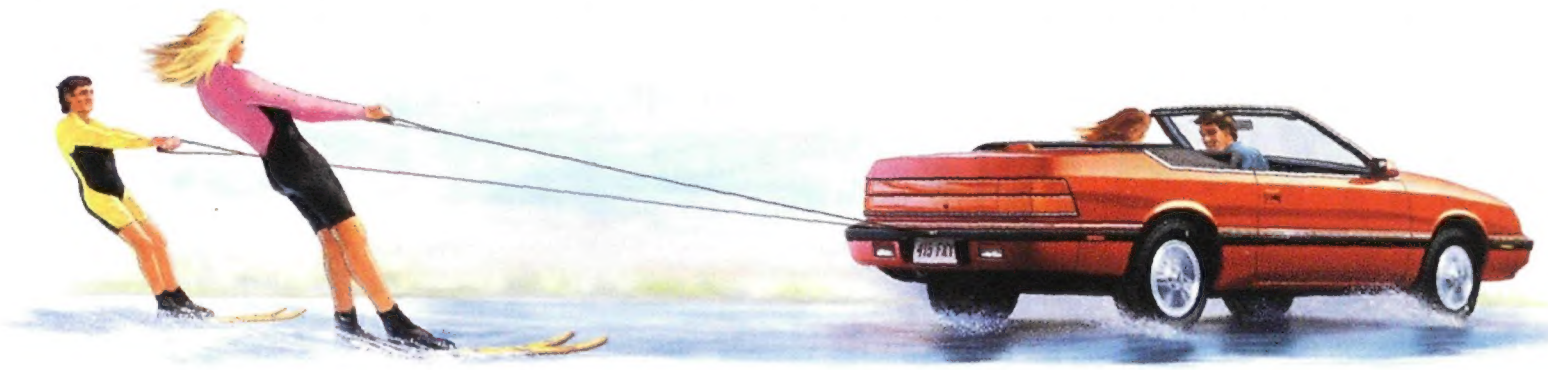

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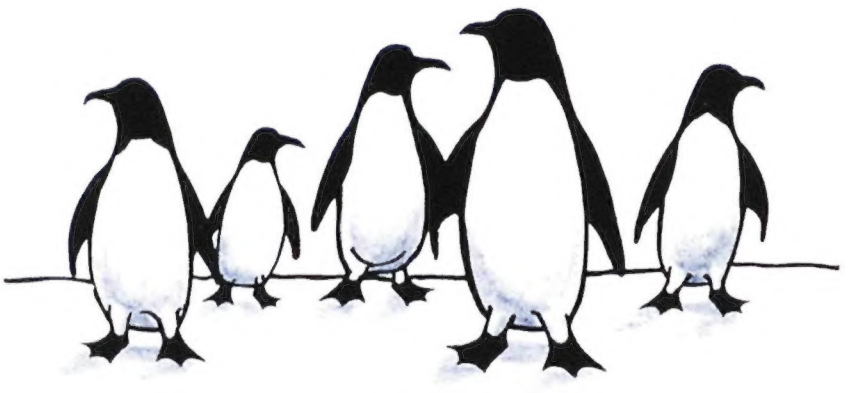

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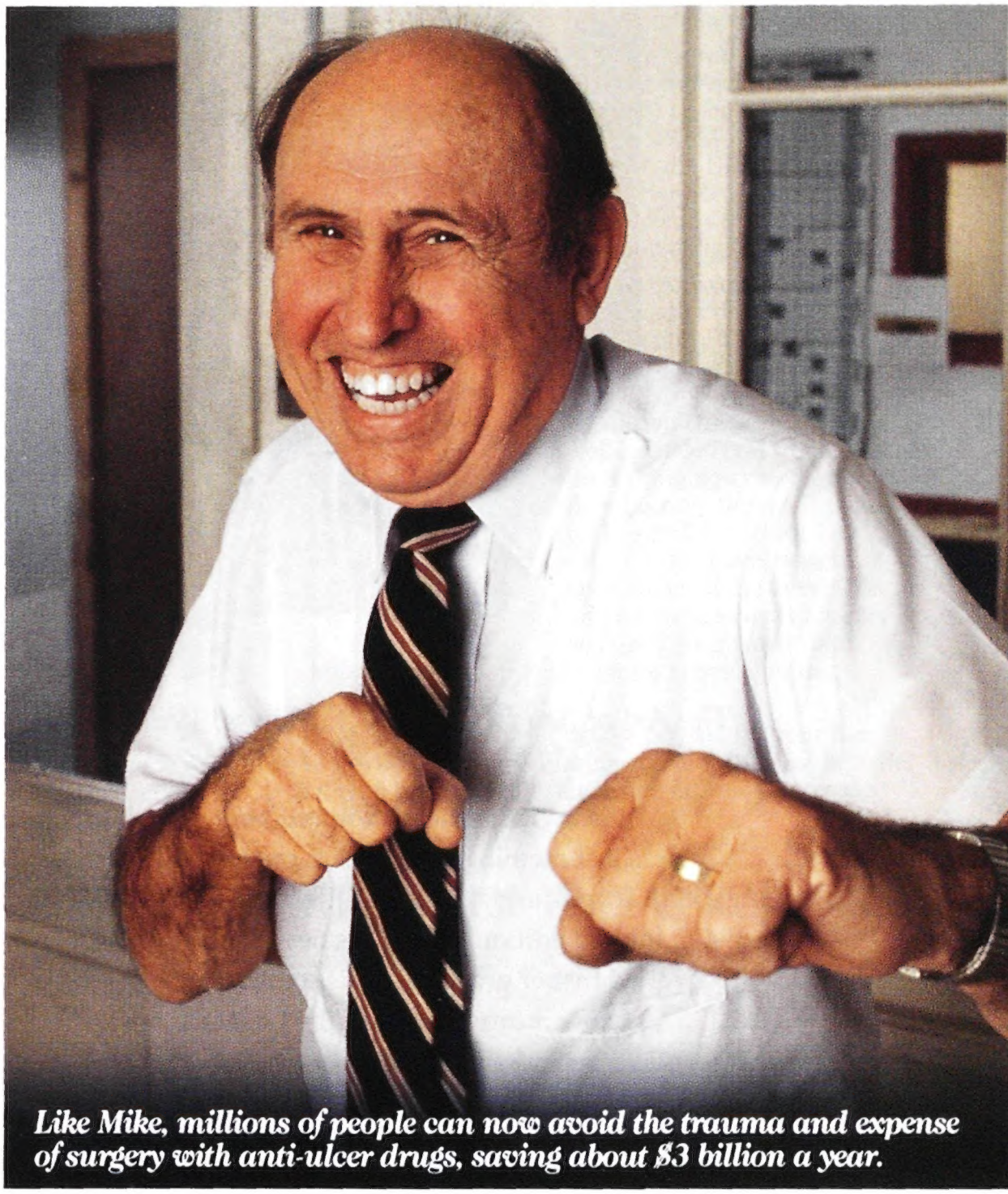

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Smithsonian horizons

A Japanese painter has proposed a Red Cross for Cultural Heritage to deal with savagery affecting monuments

The Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art has recently and splendidly reopened after a major renovation. With generous private as well as public support, its great collections are more painstakingly conserved and sumptuously displayed than ever. Among the private donors to whom we are particularly indebted is Ikuo Hirayama, internationally known painter and president of the Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music. But beyond this instance of his generosity, he is now pursuing a far broader philanthropic objective: establishing an International Red Cross for Cultural Heritage.

Such a body would need to have many diverse means and ends. Consider merely one among them. Nightly television has driven the horrors of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia into the world's consciousness–and conscience. But the crimes that are being committed there before our eyes have, in the broadest sense, culture and history as not only their principal pretexts but also as their victims.

There is nothing new about deliberate destruction both to and in the name of cultural heritage. But places of religious worship, historic buildings, museums, educational institutions and indeed whole cities recognized as monuments to earlier ages of greatness do not merely suffer unintended, accidental damage as a result of hostilities. Instead, with increasing frequency, they seem to be consciously selected for treatment with special, systematic savagery.

Almost nothing could be more obscene, in my view, than for any nation or group to engage in violence in support of its own stereotypes of cultural or ethnic superiority or imagined wrongs of the past. Any great culture worthy of the name is ecumenical. It reaches out to bridge differences, to stress our common aspirations and similarities, to add to as well as draw from the common pool of the world's traditions. To practice apartheid or ethnic cleansing is, it is now almost universally recognized, a crime of violence against humanity itself. Should not the same principle apply when the immediate target of appropriation or violence is not human life but the deeply held symbols and values expressed in the cultural heritage that undergirds and gives direction to it?

Barbarism of this sort generally intersects profitably with a flow of stolen art into private collections. Recent civil disorders in Iraq, Lebanon and Cambodia are cases in point, and churches and museums within the territory of the former Soviet Union are also beginning to report alarming losses. Large-scale depredations have badly marred some of the ruined Mayan cities in Guatemala, and public lands in the Western United States also are not immune to the same kind of predatory activities.

UNESCO has designated some 370 World Heritage Sites. Even if too narrow in scope and too widely flouted, this designation at least provides an appropriately international basis on which to work for a better, more effective degree of protection. At the same time, Red Cross Conventions have proved to be the only rules of civilization that all but the most brutalized of combatants make at least a pretense of following in warfare. Both approaches converge to support Professor Hirayama's new purpose.

There are 73 signatories to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on illicit trafficking in cultural property, but so far the United States is the only major art importing country to accept and begin to implement it. Emergency import bans have been placed on certain classes of artifacts from several Latin American countries. Our record of court actions against collectors as well as dealers is decidedly mixed, but even a few well-publicized, successful actions leading to imprisonment as well as repatriation must serve as at least a partial deterrent.

All of the major art importing countries–and exporting countries as well–have what has been called an "international hodgepodge of laws [that] can be a tremendous advantage to people who wish to move and sell stolen art"; few if any penalties are in practice attached to its acquisition. Prevailingly, the developed countries continue to tolerate, and sometimes even celebrate, commerce in the cultural patrimony of less-wealthy nations. And the seemingly insatiable demand is such that the countries suffering the greatest losses cannot by themselves bring to an end this source of international discord.

Developing countries of course must share responsibility for stemming their own losses. In the spirit of helping to create a world cultural heritage on which all can draw, even those most victimized would do well to provide for at least the temporary presence of some outstanding examples of their cultural products in the great museums of the world. But those should be independent decisions of the countries of origin, not ones that are imposed externally by a market-driven process.

The glare of adverse publicity may well be the most effective force we can employ. Professor Hirayama's proposal should help toward that end. But also needed is more-effective collaboration of international law enforcement agencies and, one hopes, wider adherence among the developed countries to the UNESCO Convention. There is an entire chain of complicity to be broken, one that is destructive not only of international comity but of culture itself.

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Around the Mall and beyond

Old Glory flew in ports the world over, but its fame dates to 1862 when it came out of hiding and was raised triumphantly over the Nashville State Capitol.

Have you heard about the Tennessee Unionist who hid a flag in a quilt? How about live peacocks at the Freer?

During World War II, American magazines made a habit of displaying our flag on the cover of their July issue (or July 4 issue if they were weeklies). It became a tradition that some journals continued for a number of years. But the custom had fallen away by the time SMITHSONIAN started up 23 years ago. So instead of displaying a blaze of Old Glory's red, white and blue on this month's cover, here's a short yarn about the original Old Glory.

Back in the early 19th century, when the United States was young and small and poor-but-proud, much of our economy depended on our sailing ships. They were well built and expertly handled, and they found cargoes all over the world. Their captains displayed the American flag at ports far and wide–always large flags, for long-range identification and perhaps also to let people know that the flags symbolized a real nation, here to stay, a country to be reckoned with.

One far-ranging mariner, from the famous old Massachusetts port of Salem, was William Driver (a fine name for the master of a fast-sailing merchant ship); he flew his flag, 17 feet long and $9\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, the world over and called it "Old Glory."

That flag now lies in a huge glass enclosure on the third floor of the Smithsonian's Museum of American History. Go up the East Wing elevator and you come out near it at the entrance to Armed Forces Hall. A placard shows a picture of young Driver and tells a bit about his flag. But the story of the 169-year-old banner is confused by family legends and misted by time.

Driver's daughter, Mary Jane Driver Roland, did a brief biography in 1918 in which she quotes letters that her father wrote during his career. More recently, Louise Littleton Davis of Nashville turned out a series of fine newspaper articles about Driver and his flag, making use of what information she could glean from the Smithsonian. She hopes one day to publish a book on Captain Driver. Curators Harold Langley and Don Kloster helped her, and they go along with her account as much as the general fogginess of this history allows. I find that digging into the history of Old Glory reveals a bit about Captain Driver and his flag and a lot about life in our country in its younger days.

William Driver was born March 17, 1803, and at age $13\frac{1}{2}$ was apprenticed by his father to a blacksmith. "One Sunday," Driver wrote, "the smith's wife put me in a brown muslin shirt with a ruffled bosom, and then hurried me off to Sunday school. I cut the ruffles off my shirt, and made straight for the big ship *China*, which was just heaving anchor, and shipped for cabin boy."

Teenage boys ran away to sea with some frequency back when our ports were crammed with ships, and I suppose a ruffled shirt was a pretty fair reason. But the lads who stuck with the sea entered a generally profitable career. Driver worked hard through the years, got his master's papers and on his 21st birthday was given this big, beautiful flag by his mother and those he later called the "Salem girls." No, they didn't go out and buy it. They made it. That was the way in the 1820s.

That same year Driver was also given his first command. His crew ran the new flag up to the rigging of the vessel, and their young skipper, so goes the story, shouted "We'll call her 'Old Glory,' boys!" And for the rest of his days, Driver never missed a chance to publicize in newspapers or in his letters the name of his beloved flag.

His daughter records that on one of Driver's many voyages to the Pacific "he touched at Tahiti, and from there carried sixty-five of the descendants of the mutineers of the British ship *Bounty* back to . . . Pitcairn Island." He was said to have sailed twice around the world with Old Glory, along with other flags, snapping from the rigging high astern.

Mary Jane Roland and Louise Davis agree that it was the Civil War that publicized Old Glory. When his wife died in 1837 and left him with three small children, Driver gave up the life of the sea and moved to Nashville to care for his family. He quickly remarried and had nine more children and so spent the rest of his life there, but he remained a Unionist when Tennessee seceded.

His daughter recalls the ill-feeling toward Old Glory in 1860: "It was plainly evident its sight was offensive and no longer welcome. Loud hints, followed by menacing threats, wisely persuaded my father to remove what at one time was lustily cheered but now was an eyesore." Mary Jane and her mother finally "doubled it lengthwise, then doubled it twice;

this made it the size of the quilt into which it was sewed."

Before hiding the flag, the family took the opportunity to repair its weather-beaten fabric and update its stars. When it was made in 1824, the nation had 24 states, the last, Missouri, having joined the Union three years earlier. By 1861 ten more states had been added to the Union, and Driver showed Mary Jane and her mother how to use a doubled strip of canvas to make the backing for ten brand-new stars.

"A flag's stars could be arranged any old way, back then," Don Kloster told me. "The government didn't regulate the pattern of the stars until 1912."

Because there was a corner of the blue field with no star to fit it, Driver sewed in the small anchor that you can still see. "Since this was originally a ship's flag, it seemed right," says Kloster.

Late one night Driver took the flag to the home of a neighbor, another Union sympathizer, whose daughters Mary and Patience quickly "sewed on the covers and then quilted it as a bed comforter." Old Glory emerged from its hiding place when Nashville fell to the Yankees in February 1862. Driver removed it from the comforter and got the 6th Ohio Volunteers to raise the flag triumphantly above the State Capitol. But later, reports Mary Jane, Old Glory was at least partly eaten by some Army mules.

Hey! Wait a minute, Mary Jane! No mule ate this flag. On display, ancient and much repaired as it is, Old Glory shows no sign of mule teeth.

The family gave Old Glory to President Warren G. Harding, who passed it on to the Smithsonian. It was preserved for years but not restored for display until Louise Davis wrote an article for a Nashville paper, and citizens, remembering the old captain who had lived among them for half a century, answered the call of their local DAR and American Legion and chipped in the necessary money. When it went on display a decade ago, a young politician named Albert Gore jr. spoke briefly.

As a small addendum to the gala reopening of the Freer Gallery, a pair of peacocks–actually peafowl, since only one is a cock–have been placed in the courtyard. When you visit the refurbished museum you should glimpse them strutting about as though they owned the place. When and if the mood strikes him, the peacock, whose name is James Whistler, will erupt into his incredible display for the delectation of Sylvia, the more sobersided peahen. I'm told that he also spreads his tail feathers to show dominance.

The idea of resident peafowl is generally attributed to Linda Merrill, curator of American art at the Freer and coauthor of the superb children's book *The Princess and the Peacocks*, described in this column in May.

The birds, of course, are a natural for the Freer, with its Whistler connection. The original James Whistler was fascinated by peacocks–which strut around preening themselves, much as he did–and immortalized them in the famous Peacock Room, now freshly restored at the Freer.

A pair of peafowl and their chicks were given the run of the court 70 years ago when the gallery first opened. The press had a field day over them. On May 5, 1923, the *Boston Evening Transcript* reported that it "was not idle chance which . . . placed the peacocks which preen themselves in the sun against the rose granite of the interior court, striking a note of color which is echoed and re-echoed through every hall of the building."

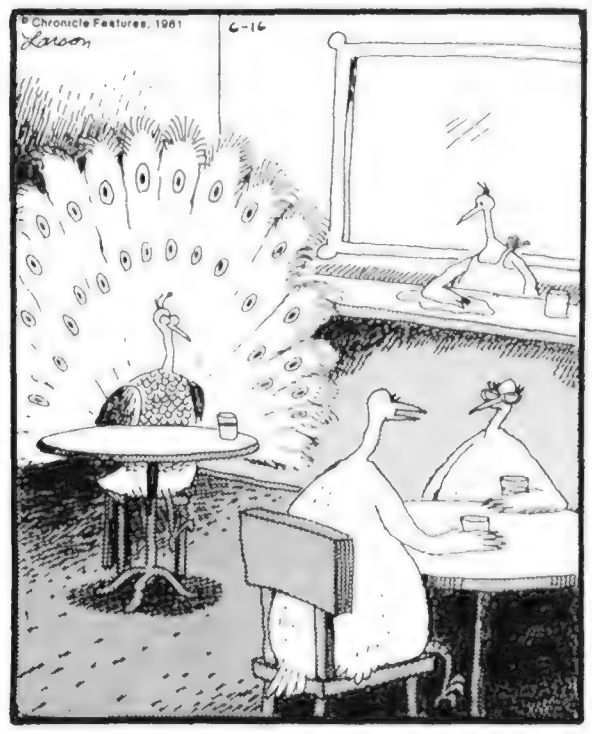
Over the ages, peacocks have inspired plenty of art, especially in Japan and their native India, where the birds are often seen on the grounds of fancy hotels. They're heard, too. The male's squawk is enough to wake the dead, not to mention a sleepy guest at 6 A.M. Who knows? Perhaps Whistler felt a special affinity toward peacocks because his own high-pitched voice was so similar to their characteristic shrill cry.

Rebecca Kingery of the Freer publications department is the peafowl curator for the gallery–with backing from the National Zoo–and she tells me that the plan is to keep the birds in the court all summer. They were raised in nearby Oakton, Virginia, by an elderly couple who have made a hobby of raising peafowl. The ones at the Freer are of the Spaulding variety, a cross of the India blue and the Java green. They like to be outside but don't appreciate cold weather.

Sarah Ridley of the Freer education department has prepared a family activity guide, entitled *Peacocks, Patterns, and Paints* (free at the information desk), to help young visitors learn about peafowl and how nature inspires art. You should be able to see the birds easily. They like to peer into the windows that surround the court. It's not that they care much for Asian art or even for Whistler's paintings. They just like to see their own reflections in the glass.

Oh. Why is the female named Sylvia? One of Merrill's favorite Gary Larson cartoons (below) quickly solves that puzzle.
Edwards Park

Chronicle Features, San Francisco



"Don't encourage him, Sylvia."

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Letters to the Editor

The Barnes Collection

Dear Sir: Your May article reminded me of a time in 1970 when I was doing a public television series called *Critic at Large*. Despite Dr. Barnes' notorious hostility to critics, I was determined to tour the collection, describe its history and contents, and illustrate it for my audience.

I hand-wrote a humble note, in ink on student notebook paper, saying I would be "between school terms" (which was true) in December and begging for an opportunity to view the historic collection. Permission was granted.

No cameras were allowed inside the gates, where a guard informed me visitors weren't allowed to take notes. I did so under the gaze of more-tolerant guards or by rushing to the men's room to scribble.

We were forced to illustrate my remarks by a few slides I had taken through the fence and some muddy old color illustrations from a 1942 *Saturday Evening Post* series, "The Terrible-Tempered Dr. Barnes"–the only time, as far as I know, that he let his treasures be photographed in color. We filled in with black-and-white photographs from his books.

In the end, I secretly sympathized with his cranky disdain for the academic and critical establishment I represented, and with his willful insistence on showing his paintings only on his own didactic terms. He hated both the know-it-all jargon of the experts and the vapid gushing of the general public. Now, touring museums on three continents, the paintings he collected will no doubt attract both.

David Littlejohn
Berkeley, California

Dear Sir: Dr. and Mrs. Barnes, spending their summers in Brittany, grew fond of their landlady's little dog who persistently followed Dr. Barnes on his walks. The landlady was persuaded to let Fidèle sail back to New York with her tenants. Dr. Barnes did not have admission papers for Fidèle, so he carried the little fellow ashore, discreetly concealed. Fidèle ran about the pier while the doctor cleared customs and immigration; once past the authorities, Dr. Barnes whistled, and Fidèle scampered into the taxi with his master. His little basket is still on display in the Barnes home.

Barbara Madison
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

Duke Ellington

Dear Sir: I could not help but smile at the reference to Duke Ellington's charm with the ladies. Back in the mid-1960s, he played for the Midland, Texas, Junior League's charity ball. During the evening I approached the bandstand and requested his famous "Satin Doll." About half an hour later Duke announced that he was going to play "Satin Doll" for "the most beautiful woman here this evening,

Do you ever get motion sickness? You know that queasy, nauseous feeling?

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and you know who you are." You can imagine how grand I felt—until two friends boasted to me that *they* had asked Duke to play the song. Who knows how many others had made the same request?
Suzanne Seright
Midland, Texas

Dear Sir: I was happy that Geoffrey Ward gave some credit to Billy Strayhorn; arrangers such as he really create the sound of the band and too often are the unsung heroes of the musical world. To mention a few great ones, Eddie Sauter, Bill Binnegan, Bill Holman, Fletcher Henderson, Billy May and Sammy Nestico created sounds associated with Glenn Miller, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey and Count Basie.
George Hipp
Baltimore, Maryland

Dear Sir: In 1963, as president of the junior class at Ithaca College, I was charged with presenting Spring Weekend. My budget was $2,000. A New York City booking agency gave me a list of no-name bands, advising me that Duke Ellington's price was beyond my total budget.

In a fit of madness I offered him the $2,000, asking him to tell Mr. Ellington it was all the money we had. Three days later I heard that Duke would be happy to perform. He brought them all: Harry Carney, Cootie Williams, Johnny Hodges, Lawrence Brown, Paul Gonsalves.
Frank J. Buono
Binghamton, New York

Blacksmiths

Dear Sir: It is important to note that Tom Alexander's fine article on the resurgence of blacksmithing treats a typical process, not an anomaly. Within every utilitarian iron craftsman there lives the soul of an artist, and when the last broken chain has been repaired and the last plow sharpened—maybe even before—many a blacksmith keeps the forge stoked and turns to making the beautiful objects he or she has been dreaming about.

Twenty years ago, working on a small folk art exhibition, I had the chance to invite the artists to an elegant reception in one of the fanciest banquet halls in town. I introduced blacksmith Al Jorgensen to the local university's chancellor, and to some political officials and civic leaders. Wondering what this simple ironworker thought about the sumptuous context (and knowing better, as the room was available only to an elite membership), I asked, "Have you ever been here before?" "Not since I made all this," Jorgensen answered quietly, gesturing around the hall.

Fifty years earlier, he had made the magnificent railings, sconces, chandeliers, andirons, grilles and grates—every one!—at his forge and anvil. The hall was elegant because the "simple ironworker" at my elbow had *made* it elegant.
Roger Welsch
Dannebrog, Nebraska

Dear Sir: I have spent the past several years working on *From Forge and Anvil*, a book about Erich Riesel, a classically trained German ironworker who came to Texas between the two world wars. At 88 he may well be one of the last of the European-apprenticed ironworkers to ply his trade here. He has created magnificent works of art in the Texas hill country for well over half a century, and is the only man I know of who loved being a cowboy as much as he loved hammering steel. All he will say about his work is, "I just do it the way I see it."

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See adjoining page for additional information on adverse reactions or side effects.

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WARNINGS
Transderm Scop should not be used in children and should be used with special caution in the elderly. See **PRECAUTIONS.**

Since drowsiness, disorientation, and confusion may occur with the use of scopolamine, patients should be warned of the possibility and cautioned against engaging in activities that require mental alertness, such as driving a motor vehicle or operating dangerous machinery.

Potentially alarming idiosyncratic reactions may occur with ordinary therapeutic doses of scopolamine.

PRECAUTIONS
General. Scopolamine should be used with caution in patients with pyloric obstruction, or urinary bladder neck obstruction.

Caution should be exercised when administering an antiemetic or anti muscarinic drug to patients suspected of having intestinal obstruction.

Transderm Scop should be used with special caution in the elderly or in individuals with impaired metabolic, liver or kidney functions, because of the increased likelihood of CNS effects.

Information for Patients. Since scopolamine can cause temporary dilation of the pupils and blurred vision if it comes in contact with the eyes, patients should be strongly advised to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water immediately after handling the patch.

Patients should be advised to remove the patch immediately and contact a physician in the unlikely event that they experience symptoms of acute narrow-angle glaucoma (pain in and reddening of the eyes accompanied by dilated pupils).

Patients should be warned against driving a motor vehicle or operating dangerous machinery. A patient brochure is available.

Drug Interactions. Scopolamine should be used with care in patients taking drugs, including alcohol, capable of causing CNS effects. Special attention should be given to drugs having anticholinergic properties, e.g., belladonna alkaloids, antihistamines (including meclizine), and antidepressants.

Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility. No long-term studies in animals have been performed to evaluate carcinogenic potential. Fertility studies were performed in female rats and revealed no evidence of impaired fertility or harm to the fetus due to scopolamine hydrobromide administered by daily subcutaneous injection. In the highest dose group (plasma level approximately 500 times the level achieved in humans using a transdermal system), reduced maternal body weights were observed.

Pregnancy Category C. Teratogenic studies were performed in pregnant rats and rabbits with scopolamine hydrobromide administered by daily intravenous injection. No adverse effects were recorded in the rats. In the rabbits, the highest dose (plasma level approximately 100 times the level achieved in humans using a transdermal system) of drug administered had a marginal embryotoxic effect. Transderm Scop should be used during pregnancy only if the anticipated benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus.

Nursing Mothers. It is not known whether scopolamine is excreted in human milk. Because many drugs are excreted in human milk, caution should be exercised when Transderm Scop is administered to a nursing woman.

Pediatric Use. Children are particularly susceptible to the side effects of belladonna alkaloids. Transderm Scop should not be used in children because it is not known whether this system will release an amount of scopolamine that could produce serious adverse effects in children.

ADVERSE REACTIONS
The most frequent adverse reaction to Transderm Scop is dryness of the mouth. This occurs in about two thirds of the people. A less frequent adverse reaction is drowsiness, which occurs in less than one sixth of the people. Transient impairment of eye accommodation, including blurred vision and dilation of the pupils, is also observed.

The following adverse reactions have also been reported on infrequent occasions during the use of Transderm Scop: disorientation, memory disturbances, dizziness, restlessness, hallucinations, confusion, difficulty urinating, rashes and erythema, acute narrow-angle glaucoma, and dry itchy, or red eyes.

Drug Withdrawal: Symptoms including dizziness, nausea, vomiting headache and disturbances of equilibrium have been reported in a few patients following discontinuation of the use of the Transderm Scop system. These symptoms have occurred most often in patients who have used the systems for more than three days.

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From ranch gate to chapel chandelier, his traditional training has been so elegantly adapted to the American Southwest it draws admiration from art connoisseurs and aspiring smiths alike.
Candace Leslie
Bryan, Texas

The Celts

Dear Sir: The most Celtic of all people are the Welsh, whose language is still spoken daily by hundreds of thousands of them. The use of Gaelic in Ireland and Scotland is far more rare.

The annual weeklong National Eisteddfod of Wales traces its roots back over 1,000 years. Welsh is the only language used in all competitive events. The festival includes hundreds of performing artists competing for highly coveted awards. Music (especially vocal and harp) and poetry are closest to the Welsh Celtic heart. To be crowned winner of the poetry competition is the highest achievement a Welsh poet can hope for. It is not uncommon for 30,000 to 40,000 people to be present the day the bard is crowned.
Dafydd T. Evans
Manhattan Beach, California

Thomas Jefferson

Dear Sir: On May 20, 1836, Lieut. Uriah Phillips Levy, USN, rescued Monticello from ruin. He purchased Monticello, its outbuildings and 218 acres of property for $2,500 and began to salvage the plantation, greatly deteriorated in the ten years since Jefferson's death. He spent most of his life, when not at sea, caring for the estate.

Commodore Levy bequeathed Monticello to the people of the United States, but the Civil War prevented the will from being carried out. In 1879, Uriah's nephew, Jefferson Monroe Levy, became proprietor of Monticello and began repairing the ravages of years of neglect and vandalism. The future New York Congressman restored the home, reclaimed lost furnishings and reproduced other items. He always welcomed visitors and, in 1923, sold Monticello at a bargain price to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation so all Americans could share in its heritage. My husband, Rob, is proud of the contributions his great-great-great-uncle Uriah and his great-great-uncle Jefferson made in helping preserve this stately landmark.
Ana M. Hoffman
Germantown, Maryland

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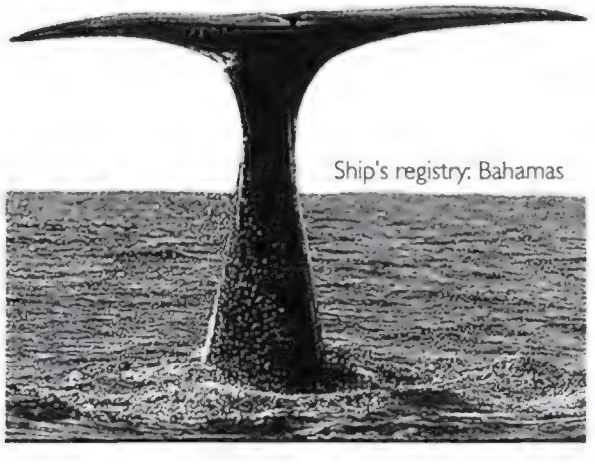

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Phenomena, comment and notes

Oh, what a little chaos can do: the end of conventional wisdom, and a feeling of being alone in the cosmos

Sometimes things you know to be absolutely true turn out to be false. This happens to all of us occasionally, but I recently had the experience of having not one, but two things that "everyone knows" shot down in about 40 minutes.

Everyone knows that there are lots of extraterrestrials out there. Think of the starship *Enterprise* and the Klingons, for example, or the bar scene from the movie *Star Wars*, in which dozens of different life-forms crowded into a sleazy dive. On a less fictional note, NASA has begun a decade-long $100 million search for signals from extraterrestrial civilizations. All of this is based on the notion that the conditions that created life on Earth must have been reproduced in many places, and that in at least some of these places life and intelligence must have come into existence.

Then there is the solar system. Everyone knows that the planets orbit the Sun in majestic splendor, each ticking off its year like the pendulum of an old grandfather clock. In fact, when the followers of Isaac Newton began unraveling the secrets of the planets 300 years ago, they often used that analogy. In their view, God had "wound up the clock" when He created the Universe, and what they were observing was the steady, inexorable working out of His plans, tick by tick. "God's in his heaven,/All's right with the world!" wrote Robert Browning.

It's a good thing Browning wasn't at the last annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Thousands of scientists, teachers and reporters had flocked to Boston's Hynes Convention Center for five days of nonstop seminars, discussions, lectures and exhibits designed to explore the latest advances in every field of science. It's an environment in which it's very easy to go into information overload. I was surely approaching that state myself when I wandered into a darkened lecture hall late in the day and settled down into a seat in the back row.

MIT astrophysicist Jack Wisdom was talking about calculations his group has done that indicate that the solar system, far from being the regular, clockwork sort of place envisaged by Newton, is actually chaotic. The term "chaos" conjures up images of planets gone amok—zipping around at random, bashing into each other, and so on. This isn't the way the term is used by scientists, though. "Chaos" is not a synonym for "randomness." A chaotic system can look very ordered and regular. Take the solar system as an example. It was Newton's great in-

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V I R G I N I A

sight, as true today as it was 300 years ago, that the most important influence on the motion of each planet is the Sun. If only the Sun mattered, each planet would indeed go around in a stately, repeating ellipse–just like clockwork.

The catch, of course, is that the Sun isn't the whole story. Every other planet is tugging on Earth, and Earth is tugging on each of them. The forces on Earth change both in size and direction as the other planets (and Earth) move around. If you want to know what Earth will be doing in the future, you have to take into account this constantly shifting kaleidoscope of forces. Newton and his followers realized this, of course, but they didn't have the mathematical tools to deal with all that complexity.

Today we have computers, and Wisdom's MIT group even built their own specialized machine for their calculations. Jack Wisdom and Gerald Jay Sussman, also of MIT, published a preliminary report in *Science* last summer. They start by calculating the positions of the planets when Earth is at a particular place. They then set up a parallel problem in which everything is the same except that Earth has moved slightly–perhaps no more than the thickness of a dime–around its orbit. The computer then carries both solar systems forward in time, and the scientists watch to see whether the positions of Earth in the two models start to diverge. If they don't, you have a nice clockwork universe, even if it is complicated. But if they do, and if the two Earths keep moving farther apart rapidly, then the system may be what scientists call "chaotic." The characteristic of such systems is that if you make even a tiny error in specifying where you're starting off, your predictions will eventually diverge drastically from what happens in the real world.

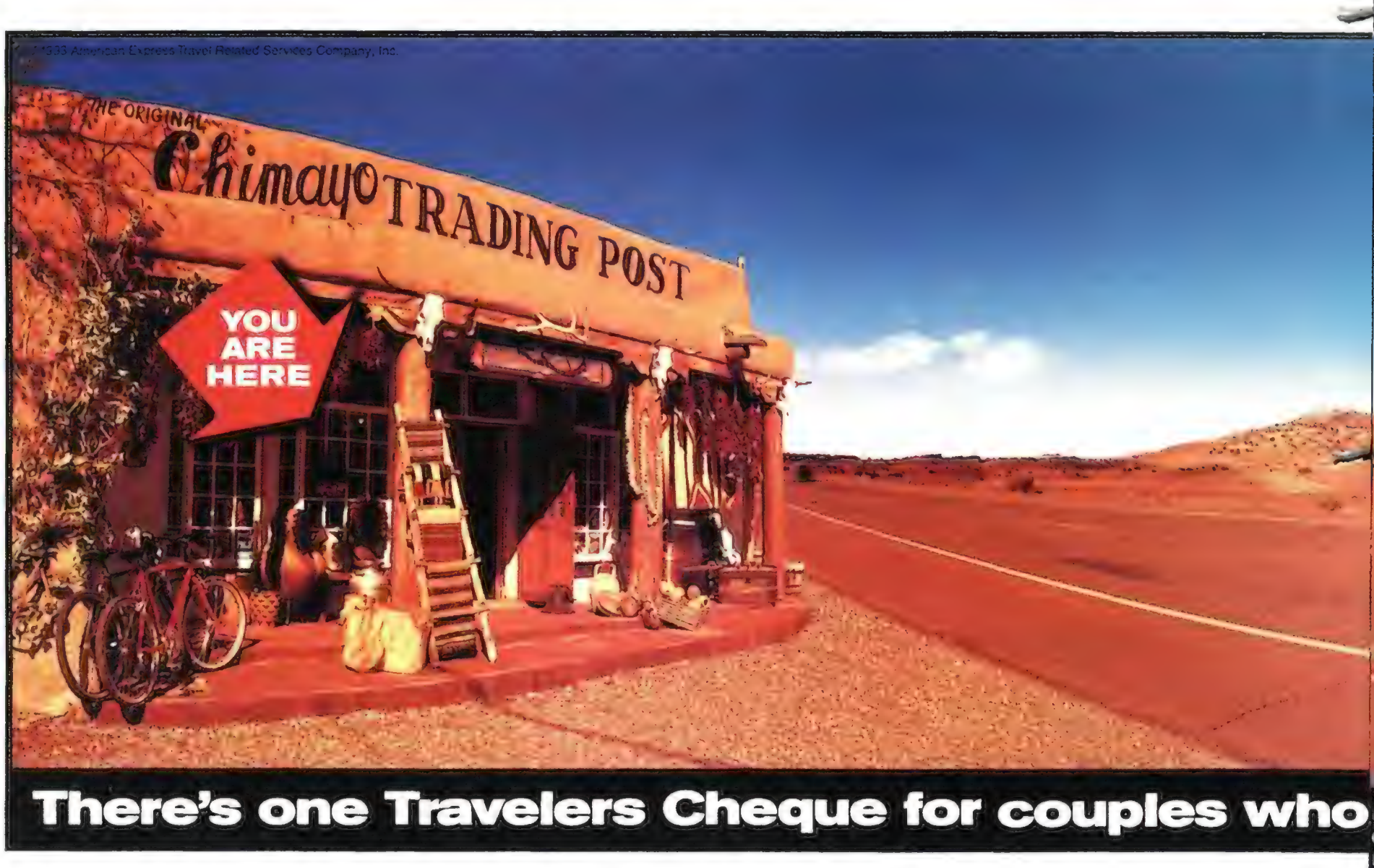
"Well, there goes the clockwork universe," I thought. But as I watched the presentation, I began to realize that the solar system wasn't all *that* chaotic. Films of the orbits resembled a set of concentric Hula-Hoops tied to a center by elastic bands. The orbits of the planets jiggled around a bit, but things never got wild. The solar system may be chaotic in the technical sense, but nothing really dramatic ever seems to happen because of it.

And that's a good thing, because the

Unlike Luke Skywalker in a *Star Wars* sequel, we may never meet our Yoda.

one thing we do know about the long-term behavior of the solar system is that Earth has never been subjected to life-terminating climatic changes. The oceans have never boiled, for example, nor have they ever frozen solid. Astronomers talk in terms of a "continuously habitable zone," a narrow band surrounding a star in which an orbiting planet can sustain liquid water on its surface for long periods of time. Earth has never been outside of this zone.

It wasn't until Wisdom dropped the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other shoe, however, that I realized that all of this stuff about chaos was related to extraterrestrials. Not only are the orbits of the planets chaotic, he told us, but so are the directions of many of the axes of rotation of those planets.

Earth's axis of rotation is an imaginary line that goes through the North and South poles. At the moment, it is tilted at an angle of about 23.5 degrees from the vertical and describes a lazy circle in space every 26,000 years, much like the axis of a tilted spinning top. The amount of tilt doesn't change by more than a degree or so over geological periods of time. This means that many present features of Earth's climate—the alternation of seasons between summer and winter, for example—have always been present.

But the story on Mars is quite different. Wisdom and graduate student Jihad Tourma have found that the direction of its axis of rotation moves around in space—in effect, its north pole points all over the map. It seems that the other planets in the inner solar system don't have the kind of stable axis of rotation that Earth enjoys.

Why doesn't Earth's axis flop around, too? The answer is simple, according to a team of French scientists led by Jacques Laskar of the Bureau des Longitudes in Paris. Earth, unlike the other planets, has a moon that is large relative to itself. It appears that the force that the Moon exerts on Earth—the same force that raises tides on the oceans—serves to stabilize the direction of our planet's axis of rotation. Without the Moon, our own north pole would wobble around in space, just as Mars' does.

So what would Earth have been like without the Moon? Think about this: the little 1-degree wobbles of Earth's axis are thought to be crucial in initiating and ending ice ages. If the tilt angle got to 54 degrees or more, there would actually be more energy from the Sun falling on the poles than on the Equator. Given the exquisite sensitivity of Earth's biosphere to small changes, what would massive fluctuations like that do to the climate? It's not hard to imagine such changes wiping out all life on the planet.

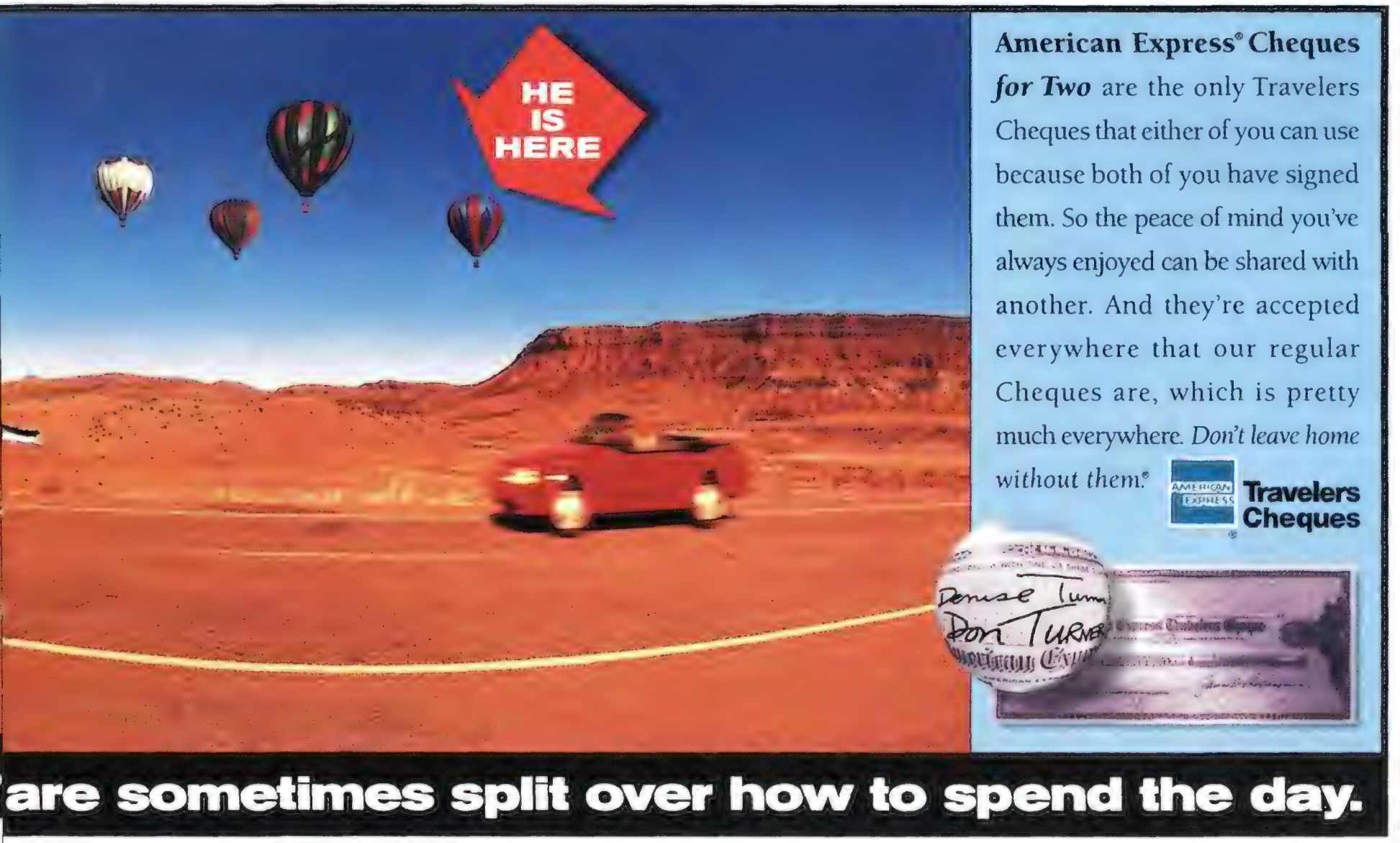
If this is the case, then our view of life in the galaxy may have to change dramatically. In order for intelligent life to evolve, a planet has to form in an orbit that, despite chaos, remains in the continuously habitable zone of its sun. But in addition, perhaps, *that planet has to have a large moon.*

How many such planets can there be in the galaxy? Our present best theory is that the Moon was formed as a result of a collision between the newly formed Earth and a large asteroid. Such collisions during the formation of planetary systems are surely unlikely, and my guess is that Earth could well be the only planet in the Milky Way that satisfies both requirements for life to develop.

If this is true, the conventional wisdom on extraterrestrials is wrong. The galaxy isn't teeming with intelligent life waiting to communicate with us. There may be no one out there.

As I walked out into the Boston night, I could see a few stars through the haze of the city. Somehow they seemed more distant, colder, than they had the night before. Who would have thought that a few harmless computer calculations could make you feel so alone?

James Trefil
Robinson Professor of Physics
George Mason University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Smithsonian highlights

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Receive a special free Associates' Planning Packet. Write Smithsonian Information, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560, or call (202) 357-2700; hearing-impaired service, TTY: (202) 357-1729. *Note:* Parking near Smithsonian museums is limited. Members are encouraged to use the convenient Metrorail subway system (details in packet).

Begin your visit at the Smithsonian Information Center's Associates' Reception Desk—open from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. daily—in the Castle. The Court dining room, located in the National Museum of Natural History, is open daily, 11 A.M. to 3 P.M.

Extended summer hours

The American History, Natural History and Air and Space museums are operating on extended hours daily from 10 A.M. to 6:30 P.M. through Labor Day, Monday, September 6. Hours at the National Zoo are 9 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. daily for buildings, and 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. for grounds. Other Smithsonian museums are generally open from 10 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. daily.

Festival of American Folklife

The 27th annual Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife is being held on the Mall July 1-5, from 11 A.M. to 5:30 P.M. This year's festival features programs on the culture of the Borderlands, social dance in America and music from the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area.

Special July exhibits, events

Renwick Gallery

American Wicker (through August 1) Exhibit traces history and stylistic evolution of American woven furniture from 1850 to 1930. See *Highlights continued*, page 22.

National Museum of American Art

American Art at the 1893 World's Fair (through August 15) Exhibition held jointly with the National Portrait Gallery brings together 100 of the American paintings and sculptures displayed at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition.

National Portrait Gallery

Contemporary Self-Portraits from the James Goode Collection (July 30-December 5) Works from the 1970s and '80s range in style from abstract to photorealist.

Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

The Divine Word of Islam (July 4-January 2, 1994) Exhibition of 23 works, dating from the 14th through 18th century, includes bound manuscripts of the Koran and books of prayer. Objects are from Egypt, Iran and Turkey.

Freer Gallery of Art

America Meets Asia Newly renovated and reinstalled galleries feature Asian and 19th- and early 20th-century American art, including the world's most important collection of works by James McNeill Whistler.

National Museum of African Art

Dreaming the Other World (through September 9) Exhibit examines the belief of the Baule peoples of central Côte d'Ivoire in mirror-image, or "Other World," mates.

National Air and Space Museum

A "Blueprint for Space" (through April 1994) Exhibition showcases collection of artworks of space imagery commissioned in the 1950s by *Collier's* magazine.

Where Next, Columbus? Gallery looks ahead to the next 500 years of exploration.

National Museum of American History

Beyond Category: The Musical Genius of Duke Ellington (through September 6) Exhibit organized by NMAH and the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service examines the 50-year career of the celebrated composer and bandleader.

National Postal Museum

The Smithsonian's newest museum, located next to Union Station on Capitol Hill, opens July 30 with displays tracing the history of the Postal Service and mail delivery. Items include Benjamin Franklin's 1770s post office ledger, an 1850s mail coach, and U.S. and international stamps.

National Museum of Natural History

Dinosaurs...A Global View (through September 6) Lifelike sculptures, detailed paintings and sketches track the evolution of dinosaurs over millions of years.

National Zoological Park

Amazonia New permanent installation recreates a microcosm of the world's largest rain forest and river habitat, and explores the wonders of this richly diverse ecosystem.

Hirshhorn Museum & Sculpture Garden

Jean Dubuffet, 1943-1963: Paintings, Sculptures, Assemblages (through September 12) Exhibition features some 100 works including portraits, cityscapes and nudes.

Anacostia Museum

Always There: African-American Presence in American Quilts (July 18-October 17) Exhibit of 19th- and 20th-century quilts, photographs and personal objects.

International Gallery, S. Dillon Ripley Center

Shared Visions: Native American Painters and Sculptors in the 20th Century (through October 3) Exhibition showcases the "best of the best" in native-American art.

Cooper-Hewitt Museum (New York)

Czech Cubism: Architecture and Design (through July 25) Major retrospective.

Cheryl Riley: The Process of Design (through September 26) First exhibit in series of "Designer Focus" shows.

Exhibition catalogs

Catalogs currently available include:

American Wicker ($45/$25 paper)

Jean Dubuffet, 1943-1963: Paintings, Sculptures, Assemblages ($60/$29.95 paper)

Revisiting the White City: American Art at the 1893 World's Fair ($60/$35 paper)

A Blueprint for Space ($60/$24.95 paper)

To order, send check or money order to Smithsonian Museum Shops, 8308 Cinder Bed Road, Newington, Virginia 22122. Include 15 percent of purchase to cover postage, handling (minimum, $1.75).

Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service

SITES organizes and circulates exhibitions to cities throughout the United States and abroad. To sponsor a show in your community, write SITES, Smithsonian, Washington, D.C. 20560. July exhibits include:

• Los Angeles, California (July 24-October 12) *Africa's Legacy in Mexico: Photographs by Tony Gleaton*, California Afro-American Museum.

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Highlights continued

Woven in history: American wicker

From baskets to baby carriages, woven furnishings were all the rage in the United States from the 1850s to 1930s

A late Victorian parlor, a turn-of-the-century summer porch, a pre-World War I sun room, a 1920s living room. All are part of a new exhibition on view through August 1 at the National Museum of American Art's Renwick Gallery. "American Wicker" takes visitors on a nostalgic excursion into the past, evoking wide verandas, cool breezes, elaborate reception rooms and a time when home meant comfort and support. From the ornate opulence of Victorian creations of the 1890s to the geometric simplicity of late 1920s "stick-wicker," 80 pieces of rattan, cane, reed, willow and fiber tell the story of the manufacture of wicker in America–the story of a developing nation.

"From the mid-19th century to the Great Depression, the social history of wicker reflects many of the extraordinary changes that took place in daily life as a result of transformations in the home, the workplace, scientific thinking, artistic theory and demography," explains the show's curator, Jeremy Adamson.

Although the use of wicker dates back to ancient times–the Sumerians used it, as did the Romans and the Chinese–it was in the United States after 1850 that it burgeoned into a creative art form. By the 1890s, says Adamson, "popular demand for artistic wicker proved so great that it became the most innovative and exuberant of home furnishings."

It seems remarkable that a wild Oriental vine should have played such a material role in late 19th-century America. At the time, however, rattan and its byproducts were inextricably entwined in the fiber of everyday life–woven into everything from bookcases to beach cabanas.

In the 1990s, woven furniture is once again in demand, both in America and Europe. Not hard to understand as you venture out on the porch and hear the familiar creak of wicker stretching as you sit down to a tall glass of lemonade.

Diane M. Bolz

Lady's rocker, c. 1876, sports flag, date "1776," commemorating U.S. Centennial.

Design of rattan fireplace screen from the 1890s was based on a peacock's tail.

Victorian oak-topped wicker side table retains its original decorative color finish.

Ornate curves of sculpturesque stroller, c. 1905, were inspired by Art Nouveau.

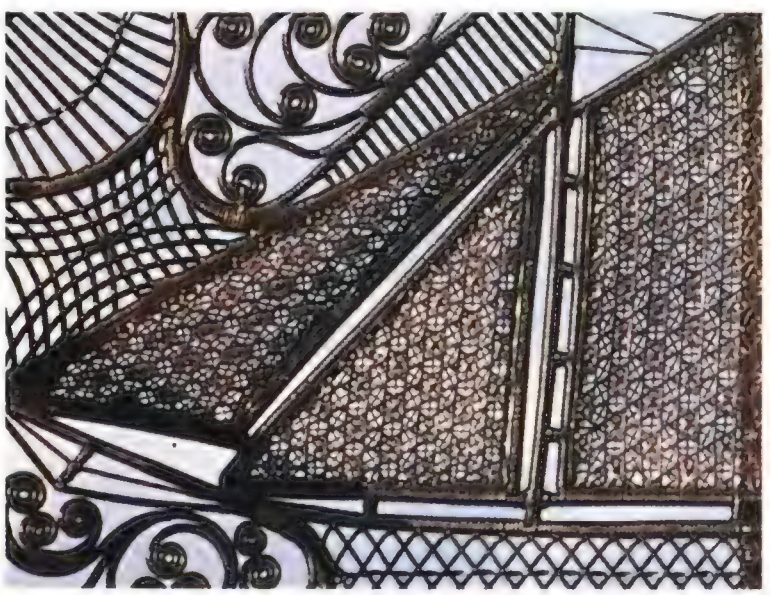

Image of a schooner under full sail was worked into back of 1890s sofa, readying it for seaside residence.

Fancy lady's reception chairs, such as this lyre-backed model, adorned fashionable late Victorian parlors.

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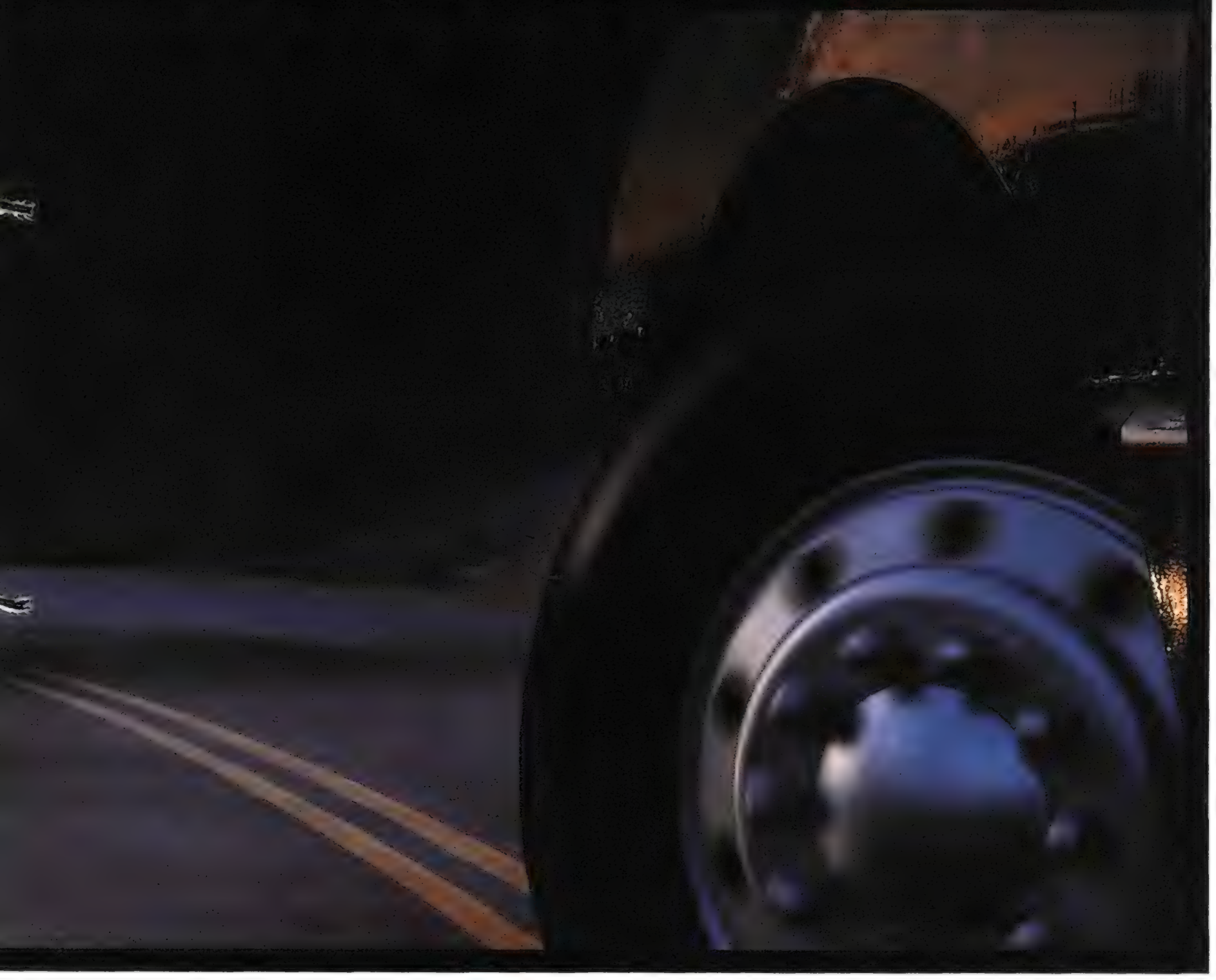

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Francis Lester (opposite) guides his old skiff across blustery Long Island Sound. Fishing has been a way of life for ten generations of Lesters, and over the years stripers (above) accounted for much of their income.

By John Budris

The bass are back, but Long Island's baymen still struggle to survive

In recent years, the hardy striped bass has staged an amazing recovery; the same can't be said of the East End's inshore fishermen

On a map, the southernmost, easternmost extremity of New York State looks a bit like the claw of a crab, but actually Long Island is a land bridge between two different worlds. From the clamor and congestion of New York City, it projects eastward along the Connecticut coast to a point roughly even with the city of New Haven, where it splits into a pair of pincerlike appendages. The lesser of these peninsulas, flanked on one side by Long Island Sound and on the other by three connecting bays, is called the North Fork. It contains a handful of scattered villages, including Mattituck, Greenport and Orient, and a slip at Orient Point for the ferry to Connecticut. The somewhat larger South Fork fronts the Atlantic Ocean and is the setting for a picturesque lighthouse at Montauk Point, miles of undeveloped beaches and several gentrified vacation towns, including Sag Harbor, Amagansett and the Hamptons.

In the old days, the so-called East End was a whaling center. Fishing has always been an important part of the economy and it still is, albeit not in the same way. Angling for sport has become increasingly popular; commercial fishing has fallen on hard times. The recreational fishermen who congregate here come, by and large, from that other world–New York City, points beyond and the rest of the Island. The inshore commercial fish-

Photographs by Doug Kuntz

The fish that spawned a feud

A natty sport fisherman of the 1940s era shoulders a huge striper. Modern rod-and-reel record is 76 pounds.

Around turn of century, baymen relax outside fish shanty. Pipe smoker is leaning against a rolled-up sail.

ermen, or baymen, who live here year-round have occupied this world for generations.

The baymen and the "sporties" are not on friendly terms. The cause is a marvelous fish, the striped bass, that until recently has been in alarmingly short supply. The two camps accuse each other of plundering the striper, and it has been necessary, not only in New York but along the entire Atlantic seaboard, for state and federal authorities to step in and restrict the catch. For the sport fishermen, what's at stake is a hobby, although a very serious one; for the baymen, it's a way of life.

The tension seldom lies far below the surface. On a recent morning near East Hampton, for example, a Jeep laden with surf-casting rods left the parking lot of the Honest Diner. The Jeep flaunted a new sticker: "I love striped bass." Outside Brent's Store down the road, several commercial fishermen were drinking coffee and jawing in the parking lot. Their rusty pickup truck, too, had a new bumper sticker: "Eat striped bass: a national resource, not a national monument." As the sportsmen cruised by the baymen and headed for the beach, the enemies eyed one another with undisguised contempt.

Rake-like implements are used for "tonging" shellfish. Oyster, scallop and clam shells litter sand near shanty.

If at times the level of antipathy seems to verge on something akin to ethnic hatred, there is reason. The commercial fishermen believe their adversaries want to cut them out of the striper action altogether, and they are right. A cadre of recreational anglers has been lobbying the State Legislature in Albany for decades to pass a bill that would do exactly that. "The sportsmen are very well organized," says the writer and naturalist Peter Matthiessen. "They have many more votes than the baymen and a great deal more money." Once a commercial fisherman and still a resident of Long Island, Matthiessen is the author of *Men's Lives*, a moving chronicle that may yet turn out to be the baymen's elegy. When he completed the manuscript in 1983, barely a hundred of them were still working full time out of East Hampton. Today only three dozen remain.

Fred Golofaro, editor of the Long Island-based *The Fishermen*, one of the most widely distributed national anglers' magazines, is unmoved. "I'm tired of all the moaning about the baymen losing their so-called 'way of life,'" he says. "These commercial guys are motivated by greed, by the dollar. It's that simple."

In point of actual fact, nothing about the imbroglio over the striper is simple, starting with the fish itself. It is an extraordinary creature. Not as acrobatic as the tarpon or as powerful as the tuna, the striper is a tremendous battler nonetheless. It can be caught by surf casting and trolling, by setting nets and by dragging seines close to shore. It is large–more than 80 pounds and six feet long at full maturity, though most striped bass caught today are well under 30 pounds. It's beautiful: silvery sides marked with dark stripes, thick muscular body, big head. It's delicious and much in demand at seafood restaurants, which is why, at up to $3 a pound dockside, this prize is worth more to commercial fishermen than almost anything else that's likely to turn up in their nets.

A fish that's always on the move

The striper gets around. Its traditional range in North America extends along the Atlantic coast from Florida to the Canadian Maritimes. It is also found off the West coast, where it was introduced in the late 1800s. Like salmon and steelhead, the striper is an anadromous fish–it moves from the sea into freshwater rivers to spawn each spring and early summer. By far its most important nursery is the Chesapeake Bay, where it is called the rockfish or rock bass. Historically, most biologists believe, the Chesapeake has produced up to 80 percent of the striper stocks along the Eastern seaboard.

Stripers have been cause for comment ever since Colonial times. In his 1614 journals of the New England coast, Captain John Smith wrote that the bass were so plentiful that "one might go over their backs drishod." A levy on the sale of those fish funded the early public schools. Stripers were the first resource in the New World to be protected by a conservation law–one that forbade Massachusetts farmers from using them as fertilizer.

For the better part of three centuries, fishermen who caught striped bass for the market had to concern themselves mainly with riptides, freak seas, cantankerous equipment and crooked brokers. Following World War II, a booming new industry presented them with something else to worry about: the sport fisherman. By the early 1970s, some ten million rod-and-reel anglers from Maine to Florida were hauling in many times more stripers each year than were the several thousand commercial net fisherman then in business.

In the late '70s and early '80s, bass stocks originating in the Chesapeake and elsewhere underwent a mysterious decline. Everyone wanted to know why. Overfishing? Pollution of spawning grounds? Acid rain? Genetic defects? Or simply natural population swings? Biologists

Freelance writer John Budris, who is a lifelong striper fisherman, lives on Martha's Vineyard, where he edits Dino, *an educational newspaper for children.*

Dory bashes through the surf off the South Fork of Long Island as baymen aboard get ready to feed out the haul-seine in mid-1980s. Net encloses fish when the ends are winched in by pair of trucks parked on beach.

weren't sure, but the pressure on lawmakers to do something–pressure generated in large measure by the sport-fishing lobby–was enormous. In 1984, Congress passed a law that placed management of all stripers on the East coast in the hands of an interstate authority, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission.

Under orders from the commission, most states imposed crippling quotas on commercial fisherman that restricted their striper catch by as much as 80 percent. Five states and Washington, D.C. prohibit the harvest of striped bass for commerce. In 1985 New York placed a moratorium on stripers and then banned them from the marketplace after studies detected unacceptable levels of PCBs. These restrictions have since been eased, but even at that, a bayman who could once rely on the bass for up to 60 percent of his annual income can now gross only about $2,000 a year, based on the 90 or so stripers he is allowed to keep.

Sport fishermen have had to bite the bullet, too. Most states now limit their take to a single fish a day, and the seasons have been shortened. Generally the keepers must be at least 36 inches long, the theory being that a fish this size has spawned at least once. Despite these restrictions, New York's 1.5 million sport fishermen took home 837,000 pounds of striped bass last year compared with only 226,000 pounds for the baymen. "It is the sport fishermen who need cutting back, not us," says Arnold Leo, the feisty secretary of the 140-member East Hampton Town Baymen's Association (EHTBA). A walking encyclopedia of fishing statistics and studies, Leo points to Maryland as an example of where, after prolonged bickering, a system was devised for dividing the annual striper take equally between commercial and sport fishermen. Because New York laws are patently unfair, Leo insists, East Hampton's baymen had no choice but to defy them one day last summer.

After EHTBA president Dan King launched his dory into the surf that day and returned with a load of illegally caught bass, two dozen other baymen and their families offered the fish to waiting state conservation officers while the TV-news cameras rolled. The protesters were issued citations that were later dismissed in court on a technicality. Among those taking part in the demonstration was pop vocalist Billy Joel (p. 32), whose music video about the baymen was among the most requested on MTV last summer. Joel's estate overlooks a stretch of the Atlantic Ocean where the baymen do much of their fishing. Largely through benefit concerts in recent years, he has contributed some $200,000 to the cause. "These people are the essence of this area," Joel says. "They're the last living link with the first families who settled here."

Ever since those families arrived from England in the late 1600s, the baymen have patched together a living by netting, trapping and shellfishing, and by setting eel, whelk and lobster pots. They're at the mercy of the seasons and the whim of the consumer. It's a way of life that

demands resourcefulness. A bayman must be a navigator, netman, carpenter, mechanic and welder.

When Dan King was a kid, the mud flats that ring Accabonac Harbor were thick with "pissers" and "littlenecks," baymen's terms for soft- and hard-shell clams. Oystering had not been good since the 1920s. The clam beds still survive, but some of them are quarantined during the summer months because they are polluted. To the north, out the "crik" and into Gardiner's Bay, a hundred or so homemade whelk pots grab the bottom and wait for King's winch. Whelks, or winkles, are fist-size snails, and when they're on the move in late summer, King may clear $200 a day working the pots. On this gusty November afternoon, he goes home with less than $40 worth piled in his baskets. "It's the last roundup," he says, as a wave sprays over the bow of his skiff. "With the cold, they're burrowing in mud now."

"I should be out on the ocean side"

After expenses King won't clear $15,000 for the year. He is silent as he approaches shore. He hops into the icy water, unconcerned when his leaky boots fill. With a shove, he grounds his thrashing boat and fetches a rickety trailer from the parking lot. A rusted roller falls off. He starts hauling the skiff onto the trailer with the electric winch on his truck. The cable unravels and snaps. King is disgusted. "I really don't want to be catching winkles in the bay," he says. "That's not where I belong. I should be out on the ocean side, haul-seining for bass."

Haul-seining has been a tradition on the East End (and in many other parts of the world) for almost as long as men have been catching fish. The baymen were introduced to haul-seining by the Montauket and Shinnecock Indians. Now they joke, with some historical accuracy, that Jesus Christ was a haul-seiner; the technique was used by Galilee fishermen during the reign of the Caesars. In the contemporary version, a motorized steel dory laden with a net is launched from a trailer at the end of a flatbed truck. One end of the net is anchored to the truck on the beach. The stern man on the dory pays out up to 2,000 feet as the vessel heads straight out at first, and then parallel to shore. After the net has been set, the dory rides the waves back to land and meets a second truck. Winches on the trucks then haul both ends of the net together, trapping the fish in the middle.

Sport fishermen complain that undersize bass and other fish are killed when the net is dragged through the surf. This was the reason offered by New York's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in 1990 when it banned haul-seining for stripers. Although baymen concede occasional unwanted mortality, they reject the claim that haul-seining is a "dirty" fishery and turn the argument back on the sportsmen. "The DEC's own data will tell you the sporties kill at least double the bass

Dan King, president of a local baymen's association, wants state ban on haul-seining striped bass rescinded.

Francis Lester (left), son Jens and grandson Mitchell remain committed to earning their living from the sea.

Christie Brinkley

Musician Billy Joel, a strong supporter of the baymen, holds an illegally caught bass at protest last summer.

that we get to bring to your dinner table," says Arnold Leo. He is talking about the mortality of the undersize fish the anglers catch and release. "A dead fish is a dead fish. So what if you landed it on a fly rod made for trout and gave it a kiss before you threw it back?"

King apologizes for the smell inside his truck. It is the sweet stench of fish scales and gurry. His hands are the chronically swollen hands of a fisherman, pricked, split and aching with infection under the calluses. Driving through the part of East Hampton known as Kingstown, along roads whose meanderings mirror the contour of Accabonac Creek, Dan points out his mother's house, an uncle's birthplace, a grandfather's old farmstead. "There at Fresh Pond my grandfather would cut the ice to pack the baymen's fish," he says. Today, subdivided lots near the pond sell for a quarter-million dollars.

Dan passes the small houses of onetime baymen who now mow lawns, shingle roofs or make change in the local stores. Amber leaves camouflage the piles of neglected gear in their yards. "When the state closed down the bass fishing in 1985, I didn't fish for a couple of years," King says. "My wife, Marsha, was in the hospital, and I was landscaping. Every morning I'd go out and see my boat in the yard, needing tending, knowing it could be making good money. It just ate away at me."

Like most baymen, King believes fishing is in his blood. "When Dan was in high school he was a star baseball player," Marsha recalls. "A scout from the New York Yankees came here to give him a tryout, but Dan didn't show up." "How could I, Sis?" King says. "It was opening day of scallop season."

Dan teases two of his three sons for eating porkchops for dinner while he eats flounder. Then, before he excuses himself to return to a list of baymen's telephone calls, he tows 15-year-old Danny jr.'s wheelchair to a hospital bed in the living room. The youngster has cerebral palsy, and as Dan hoists him he nuzzles the boy's cheek with his beard and calls him "sweetheart." Danny's face erupts in a grin. Dan slips a tape of last summer's protest into the VCR. When his father's dory appears on the screen, Danny smiles and chirps. Dan tousles his son's hair. "I suppose if we had his computer here, the one at school that lets him talk, he would be telling you something now, all right. Isn't that right, Bubby?" says King.

"I wonder if this is the end of it all"

Last year in New York, a state senator introduced a game-fish bill that would shut down the commercial striped bass fishery. Ten years ago the same legislator sponsored a law that raised the minimum commercial size from 16 inches to 24. When Dan confronted him in Albany, complaining that the bill was a death warrant for the baymen, he was informed that he could always find work changing sheets in the many motels on the East End that cater to tourists. "Sometimes I wake up in the dark and wonder if this is really the end of it all–like it's all happening in slow motion," King says.

The day John F. Kennedy defeated Richard Nixon in the Presidential election of 1960, Richard Berkley went fishing with his father. They left their New York City apartment in a gale whose force they would not fully appreciate until they reached the Montauk lighthouse. Neither Richard nor his father had ever caught a striped bass. The elder Berkley stayed in the public snack bar on the Montauk cliff from where, even with binoculars, his gangly 13-year-old son appeared as a stick figure on the line of creamy sand and white water. Father sipped coffee, and Richard hooked a bass.

The boy wrapped his prize in a newspaper and took it home. For a month he kept the fish in the refrigerator. He often took it out and washed it under cold tap water. Finally, he obeyed his mother and "interred" the decaying fish in the garbage chute–but not before secretly shrouding it in a linen napkin.

Berkley still lives in New York City. He works as an investment banker for 11 months of the year so he can fish one month. His East Side apartment is decorated with striped-bass photographs and icons. Nailed over his bed is a 50-pound trophy caught by his wife. He was on a fishing vacation in October 1987 when the stock market crashed. He kept right on casting. His investment firm, Roccus Partners, derives its title from the archaic scientific name for the striped bass, *Roccus saxatilis*.

"Obsessive," "driven"–words alone can scarcely convey the full measure of devotion Berkley and his fellow fanatics evince toward stripers. We are talking, after all, about zealots who think nothing of staggering about in the pounding surf well past the point of physical and mental exhaustion; who don wet suits and swim far off-

shore in the dead of night; who work holidays, nights and weekends to gain more time to fish.

On the weekend after George Bush is defeated by Bill Clinton, Berkley is back at Montauk. He's not alone. Cops, firemen, insurance salesmen, teachers–you name it–are all jockeying for good casting positions on the sand. A mile-long strip of parked jeeps, trucks and campers creates a metal wall between dune and ocean. Montauk becomes a city of surf casters on weekends from May to November when the bass are running.

Jack Yee is the unofficial mayor of the beach at Montauk Point State Park, where all season long he runs a kind of checkpoint for the thousands of anglers who ride their beach buggies past his decrepit trailer. He fixes reels and doles out free coffee, advice and sympathy. He campaigns nonstop to have the striper designated as a game fish. And he tells war stories. One night after a bayman's net was slashed, a few commercial fishermen set a net around Yee while he was casting from a rock and dragged him into the wash. "When the gaffs and blades came out, I thought that was it. I don't know if they wanted to kill me or scare me into shutting up, or what, but they let me go when some people came by."

John Cole is a journalist, a fisherman and the author of *Striper: A Story of Fish and Man.* These days he lives in Key West, Florida, but a long time ago he worked on the East End as a bayman. "It's the Serbs and the Croats, the Arabs and the Israelis, and it's so damned self-defeating," he says. "The baymen and the sportsmen should be natural allies, but the baymen are such easy marks. They always take the fall. If there's somebody to rightly beat up on, it's not a few dozen fishermen. It's the polluters of the Chesapeake and the Hudson and all those other rivers the bass use for spawning. If I hadn't worked on a haul-seine crew myself, I wouldn't understand the values the baymen represent. Men like Francis Lester are a truly threatened species. The bass is not."

The day Franklin D. Roosevelt defeated President Herbert Hoover in the 1932 election, Francis Lester went haul-seining with his father and four brothers. Beginning at first light, the brothers Lester made six sets. No time was allotted for voting. "Back then we fished with wooden dories and we rowed 'em, hauled in the nets by hand, no winches, no nothing. Didn't get a decent fish all day," says Francis. "It was already pret' near dark, and my father says we got to make one last set, says the southwest chop looks fishy. We was so tired, but we done it anyway. And did we set into some charge of bass! Stayed up all night packing maybe 70 boxes."

Francis Lester isn't used to throwing back haul-seined bass, but nowadays that's what he, his son Jens and his grandson Mitchell do. The DEC pays them to catch stripers for state biologist Victor Vecchio. After the net, wriggling with fish, is pulled to the beach, Vecchio weighs, measures and tags the bass. His digital scale bleeps and chirps as he weighs a monster. With a surgeon's skill, he cuts a scale sample and inserts a yellow tag into an incision he has made in the fish's girth. Cradling it as if it were a fat, squirming child, he releases the bass back into the surf.

Vecchio's study evaluates the health of the fish, tracks their migration patterns and could help determine where they come from. Baymen have long believed that most bass caught off Long Island originate in the Hud-

Sport fisherman Richard Berkley, an investment banker, casts for stripers in the surf off Montauk. Berkley says he works 11 months of the year so that he can devote the 12th month to fishing for bass.

Gear in a bayman's backyard includes outboard motor, scallop dredge (leaning on motor), pair of trap buoys.

son River, not the Chesapeake Bay, and several recent studies appear to confirm this. If the DEC can prove that 80 percent of the fish are indeed Hudson-born, New York may be exempt from the strict federal regulations intended to protect the migrating Chesapeake stock. The upshot of that for baymen and sporties alike would be increased harvests.

On tart autumn mornings in 1949, John Cole would arrive at the Lesters' backyard in darkness to find the usual clutter of nets, traps, oyster tongs, buoys, boats, eel pots and fykes (traps made of net and what looks like four Hula-Hoops). Young Jens Lester would be peering through the frost on his bedroom window, waiting for his father's Model A Ford to rumble off to the beach. Four decades later, not much has changed in that backyard. Jens became a fisherman. Francis, at 83, still is one. Against all advice, grandson Mitchell is struggling with the trade, too. After making two morning haul-seine sets for the DEC, the men are back home. Jens decides to take down a pound trap for the winter; storms and ice will spit out the stakes of the corral-like pen if it's left in. Francis decides to set some fykes for flounder.

In a chapping northwest wind, Francis slides his skiff into the Montauk shallows between two "Private Beach" signs. The skiff's wooden transom is nibbled away by 30 years of outboard motor clamps. Six fykes are heaped inside. Fykes exploit a flounder's tendency to roam the bottom. In eight feet of water, Francis jams into the mud the iron stakes that will anchor one of the fykes. His partner, Herb Fischer, flings the fyke overboard, and it unravels underwater into a garment of tube and net. Five more to set, then six to tend. They land a half-dozen flounder and a sea eel as thick as a baseball bat. The eel coils and raps the gunwales. "Don't whack him Herb! We get the son of a bitch to the market alive and we'll get 10, maybe 11 bucks for him. The Koreans buy 'em. Dead and he's lobster bait."

Motoring back to shore, Francis crouches to get out of the wind and takes a wave square in the face. Dripping, he sucks out a blue plume from his corncob pipe and chortles, "Still going, by the Jesus."

Other baymen on the East End are still going, too, but just barely. You can see them gathering in the parking lot at Louse Point most evenings, those who are still on the water together with others who have taken jobs ashore. With accents still echoing the Elizabethan Kent and Dorset dialects of their ancestors, they talk about the vital fish: sweet gossip of who caught what, who caught nothing. Mainly, though, they talk about the bass' dramatic recovery over the past several years, a comeback every bit as startling and inexplicable as its earlier decline. There is, as it happens, no compelling evidence to suggest that the federal and state management plans alone are responsible for this improbable turnabout, though of course there are those who are prepared to argue that they may well be. Neither is there any conclusive evidence to prove that the reversal is merely a matter of natural cycles come full turn, as more than a few old-timers insist. All anyone can say for certain is the bass seem to be out of danger.

It is not possible to say the same thing about the baymen. New York's governor, Mario Cuomo, may have to sign or veto the game-fish bill this summer; the bill is opposed by the DEC. This is why Dan King, although he would much rather be tending his fishing gear with family and friends, is busy huddling with lawyers instead. For the short term, at least, the baymen's most important pursuit of striped bass will be in the courts, not on the water. They are determined to fight the DEC's regulations with lawsuits and more civil disobedience. They are likewise determined to challenge any new law that deprives them of the right to catch and sell the same fish that sportsmen are allowed to catch and keep. "We've survived here for 300 years," King says. "We're not backing down. We're not going away." There is, in fact, for these fishermen who want nothing more than to live and work at the forked end of this island they have always called home, nowhere else for them to go.

Surf casters plugging for stripers vie for space during typically crowded weekend day on the beach at Montauk.

Morgan McGivern

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By John Fleischman

In Classical Athens, a market trading in the currency of ideas

For 60 years, archaeologists have pursued secrets of the Agora, where Socrates' society trafficked in wares from figs to philosophy

Building complex in Agora's southwest corner housed workings of 5th-century B.C. Athens' nascent democracy.

Athens on an August afternoon: the clear radiant light of Greece suffuses every stone and walkway. From my vantage point, I squint upward to the outcropping of the Acropolis, crowned by Athena's temple, the Parthenon; hordes of tourists lay constant siege to the site. Standing at the base of that fabled rampart, I begin to traverse a quiet, heat-baked square, crisscrossed by gravel paths, dotted with the stubs of ancient walls and scrubby pomegranate and plane trees.

This dusty archaeological park, a sanctuary amid the roar of overmotorized Athens, is in fact one of the most remarkable sites in Classical archaeology. I am crossing the Agora—or central marketplace—of ancient Athens. That this place still exists seems nothing short of miraculous. I am walking in Socrates' footsteps.

The gadfly philosopher frequented this very square—as did his compatriots in the extraordinary experiment that was Classical Athens. Shades of Pericles, Thucydides, Aristophanes, Plato. They all strolled in this place—the Agora, where philosophy and gossip were retailed along with olive oil. And where Classical Athens actually lived, traded, voted and, of course, argued. The Agora was the city's living heart. Here, politics, democracy and philosophy (their names, after all, are Greek) were born.

For every ten tourists who climb to the Parthenon, only one discovers the precincts of the serene archaeological site at its base. Those visitors are in fact missing an excursion into history made palpable, as well as a glimpse into what must be acclaimed as one of this century's most triumphant urban archaeology undertakings.

Since 1931, the American School of Classical Studies has been digging here, unearthing a dazzling array of artifacts from the layers of history compacted under this earth: Neolithic, Mycenaean, Geometric, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and more—all collected from this 30-acre site. Still, it is the objects from Classical Athens that seem to speak with greatest resonance.

And fortunately for those of us unable to make it to

Cylindrical Tholos (left) served as meeting place for Senate's 50-member executive committee. At right are columned halls where 500-strong Senate (Boule) convened. Hilltop temple, the Hephaisteion, dominates the scene.

Athens anytime soon, we have a chance to see for ourselves some of the Agora's most celebrated artifacts. The occasion of this opportunity is a striking anniversary: 2,500 years ago, the Athenian reformer Cleisthenes renounced tyranny and proclaimed the birth of a radically new form of government, democracy. His genius was to offer a straightforward plan. To diffuse powerful political factions, Cleisthenes reshuffled the Athenian city-state into ten arbitrary tribes and called 50 representatives from each to a senate, or boule, of 500. This, then, was the beginning of democracy, however imperfect and subject to subversion and strife it might have been.

Hence the arrival of the exhibition "The Birth of Democracy," which opened recently in the rotunda of the National Archives in Washington, D.C. and continues there through January 2, 1994. A few steps from our own Declaration of Independence, Constitution and Bill of Rights lie the humble tools of Athenian self-govern-

ment, nearly all of them unearthed in the Agora over the past 60 years by American excavators.

You can look upon actual fourth-century B.C. Athenian jurors' ballots, discovered still inside a terra-cotta ballot box. The ballots, stamped "official ballot," look like metal tops. Each juror was handed two; the spindle shafts designated the vote, solid for acquittal and hollow for guilty. Taking the spindle ends between thumb and forefinger, an Athenian juror was assured that no one could see which spindle he deposited in the ballot box.

For the too powerful, a decree of exile

Also on view are ostraca, pottery fragments on which Athenians inscribed the names of persons they felt too powerful for the good of the city and deserving of ostracism, or ten years' exile, a procedure formalized by Cleisthenes. More than 1,300 ostraca, condemning many famous figures–Pericles, for instance, and Aristides and Themistocles–have been found in the Agora. Looking closely at the sherds, you can spell out the names straight from the history books and realize that these ostraca were written out by contemporaries who knew these men personally. And in some cases hated them.

Ostracism was not the worst punishment the democracy could decree. The National Archives also displays a set of distinctive pottery vials uncovered from the fifth-century B.C. Athenian state prison. These tiny vials were used to hold powerful drugs, such as lethal doses of hemlock. Socrates swallowed just such a dose, voted for him in 399 B.C. by his fearful fellow citizens. Archaeologists say the death scene of Socrates described in Plato's *Phaedo* fits the layout of a precise location in the Agora–a building near the southwest corner of the market square.

Plato recounts that after Socrates took the poison, he walked about, then lay down, telling his friends to stop weeping "for I have heard that one ought to die in peace." When the numbness spread from his legs upward to his abdomen, he covered his face. His last words were, as always, ironic. Socrates claimed he had a debt to the god of medicine. "I owe a cock to Asclepius," he informed a companion, "do not forget, but pay it."

The exhibition contains several other objects associated with Socrates, including part of a small marble statue, thought to be of the philosopher, that was also recovered from the prison. Visitors can find, as well, actual hobnails and bone eyelets from the Agora shop of one Simon the cobbler. Socrates is known to have met at such a shop with young students and prominent Athenians alike.

The boundaries of the Agora were clearly marked, and entrance was forbidden to Athenian citizens who had avoided military service, disgraced themselves in the field–or mistreated their parents. Around the open square, but outside its actual boundaries, lay the key civic buildings–courts, assembly halls, military head-

Black-figure jug, c. 500 B.C., was made at workshop near Agora.

Ostracon, a pottery fragment, marks attempt to exile Pericles.

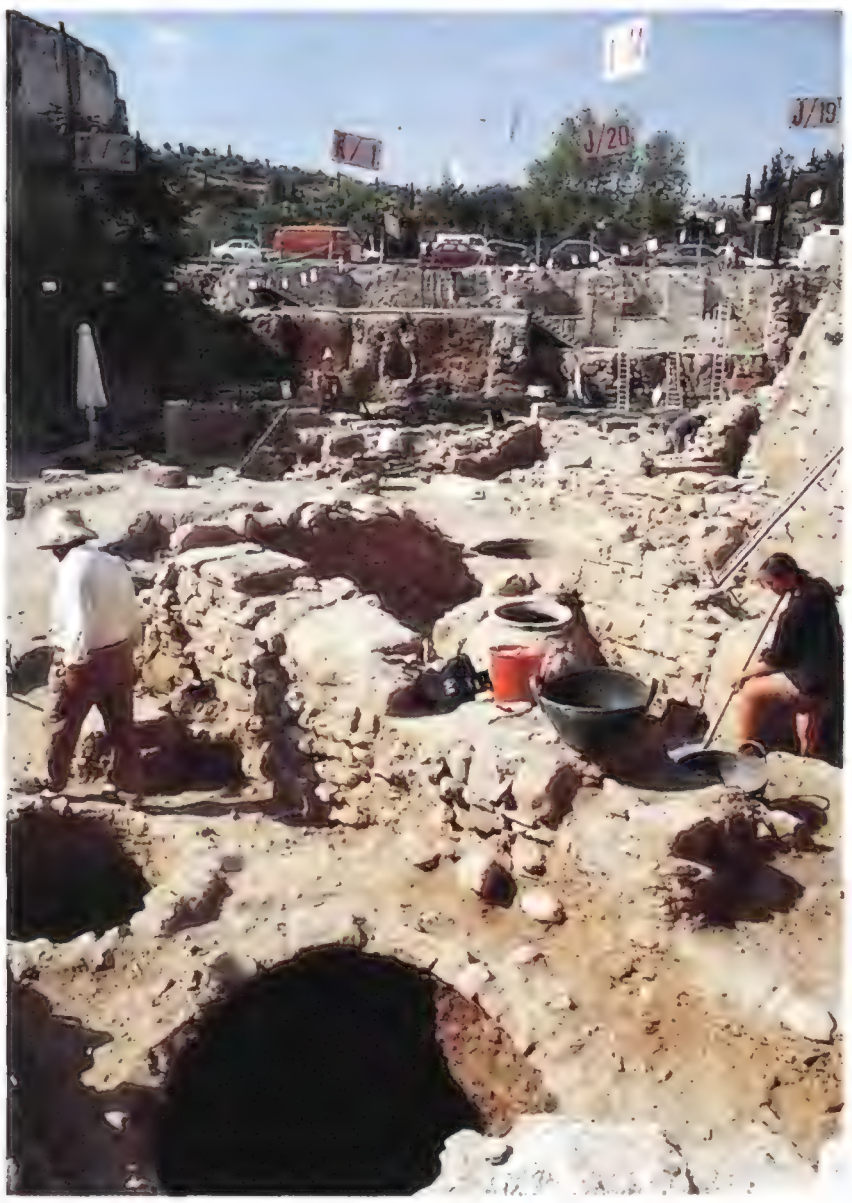
Fourth-century B.C. jurors' ballots are made of bronze.

As field director T. Leslie Shear and wife, Ione, review daily records, assistant director John Camp oversees dig of a Byzantine-era house at north end of the site.

Medicine vials held poisons like Socrates' lethal hemlock draft.

Iron hobnails were discovered in shop of Simon the cobbler.

Marble statue, 4th century B.C., probably depicts Socrates.



Near Painted Stoa ruins (in shadow, top left), current dig (in foreground) reveals 12th-century A.D. buildings.

quarters, the mint, the keepers of the weights and measures, commercial buildings and shrines to the city gods. One such shrine, the Altar of the Twelve Gods, stood within the Agora and marked the city's center.

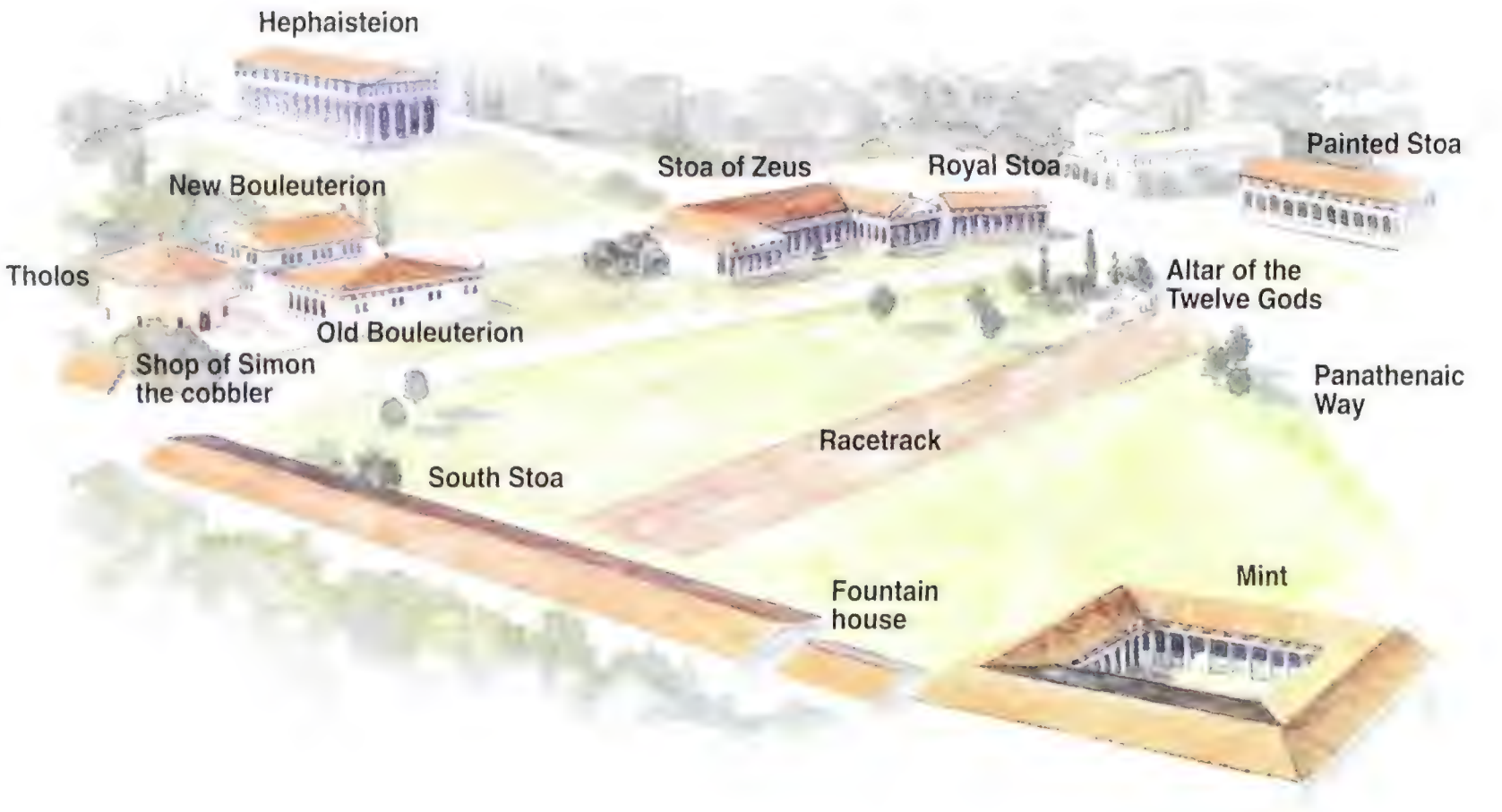
On business days, the square was filled with temporary wicker market stalls, grouped into rings where similar wares were offered. There was a ring for perfume, for money changing, for pickled fish, for slaves. The Agora was a constantly changing mix of the mundane and the momentous–pickled fish and the world's first democracy. The comic poet Eubulus described the scene: "You will find everything sold together in the same place at Athens: figs, witnesses to summonses, bunches of grapes, turnips, pears, apples, givers of evidence, roses, medlars, porridge, honeycombs, chickpeas, lawsuits, beestings-puddings, myrtle, allotment machines, irises, lambs, water clocks, laws, indictments."

"The Agora was a place for hanging out," according to archaeologist John M. Camp, who is my patient guide this afternoon. "You'd have men of affairs doing a little business, conducting a little politics and stirring up a little trouble." Camp has spent most of his adult life digging here, and he's tireless even in the heat. (He's also the author of *The Athenian Agora*, an erudite and delightful guide to the site, written for a general audience.) The real pleasure of studying this site, he says, is the shock of recognition. "Our own ideas, our own concepts originated right *here*," he told me, gesturing toward the bright open square of the Agora. "It's not only democracy, it's virtually all of Western drama, law–you name it. Over and over again, you find the only thing that's really changed is the technology. Everything else, they thought of it before. They did it before, and it all happened *here*."

In the beginning, archaeologists banked on hope

The open Agora at midday is suited only for mad tourists and foreign archaeologists, both on tight schedules. The tourists can see the Agora today because American archaeologists (funded in large part by American philanthropists–principally John D. Rockefeller jr. and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation) saved the site from total obliteration. At the outset, the archaeologists who began nosing around here in the late 1920s were banking on educated hope. Although the memory of the Agora was preserved by sources such as Plato and the historian Xenophon, tantalizing description was all that remained. That celebrated site had vanished at least 1,400 years before, lost to waves of pillaging barbarians, buried under layers of settlement from medieval times on.

In short, no one knew for sure where the ancient Agora really was. (Greek and German archaeologists had made some tentative beginnings in the 19th century, but their efforts had shed little light on the actual location.) The most likely site, authorities agreed, was at the foot of



The Classical-era Agora, c. 400 B.C., was the hub of Athenian life, the city's social, cultural, political and religious center. Vista looking northwest shows market square surrounded by civic and sacred buildings.

the northwestern slopes of the Acropolis. That area, however, was buried beneath a dense neighborhood of 19th-century houses and shops.

The debate remained largely academic until 1929, when the Greek government offered to the American School of Classical Studies a dig-now-or-forever-hold-your-peace deal. The Americans would have to demolish 300 houses and relocate 5,000 occupants. The Greek government required that a permanent museum be built for any finds and that the Agora be landscaped as a park.

The American School finally commenced excavations in 1931. As archaeologists have labored here for more than 60 years, we can read the life and times of Classical Athens in the spaces they have cleared and excavated.

Take the Panathenaic Way, for example, a diagonal street running uphill to the Acropolis. The roadway is packed gravel today, as it was in the days of the Panathenaia, the city's great religious festival. The celebrations began with the Athenian cavalry leading a procession of priests, sacrificial animals, chariots, athletes and maidens across the Agora to the temples of the gods above. All of Athens would have gathered along this route to witness the splendid parade wending across the marketplace. One Panathenaic event, the *apobates* race, in which a contestant in full armor leapt on and off a moving chariot, continued in the Agora well into the second century B.C.

With or without armor, walking uphill is not a recommended Athenian summer-afternoon activity. But taking your time and picking your shade, you can cut across the square to the base of a sharply inclined hill and look upward at a large Doric temple just beyond the western limit of the Agora. This is the Hephaisteion—a temple dedicated to Hephaestus, the god of the forge, and to Athena, patron deity of the city and of arts and crafts. Excavations have shown that it was once surrounded by shops where bronze sculpture, armor and fine pottery were made. Today the world's best-preserved Classical temple, it is a marvel unto itself. Somehow it has survived from Pericles' time onward, a marble monument to the miracle of Athens.

The temple's friezes are carved with scenes that spoke to the imagination of every Athenian. Theseus battling the Minotaur, the labors of Hercules, the Battle of the Centaurs—all images from a world where gods and men resided in a kind of rarefied complicity.

Below the Hephaisteion stood the most important buildings of the Athenian city-state. Here was the Bouleuterion where the 500 representatives of the tribes met. (An older assembly hall stood next door.) Nearby was the round, beehive-shaped Tholos where the 50 members of the executive committee of the Boule served 35- or 36-day terms of continuous duty, living and dining in the Tholos at state expense. (Those early practitioners of democracy apparently subsisted on simple fare—

John Fleischman, who wrote about the excavation of the legendary site of Troy in these pages last year, braved Athens' summer heat on the trail of his story.

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In front of the Bouleuterion stood the statues of the Eponymous Heroes, the ten tribal namesakes chosen by the Delphic Oracle (and the source of our word for a group or thing named after a real or mythical person). Athenians tended to throng before this monument–not out of piety but because this was the site of the city's public notice board, a kind of proto-daily-paper for ancient news junkies. Nearby lay the Strategeion where the ten military leaders of the tribes made their headquarters (and gave us a Greek word for military planning).

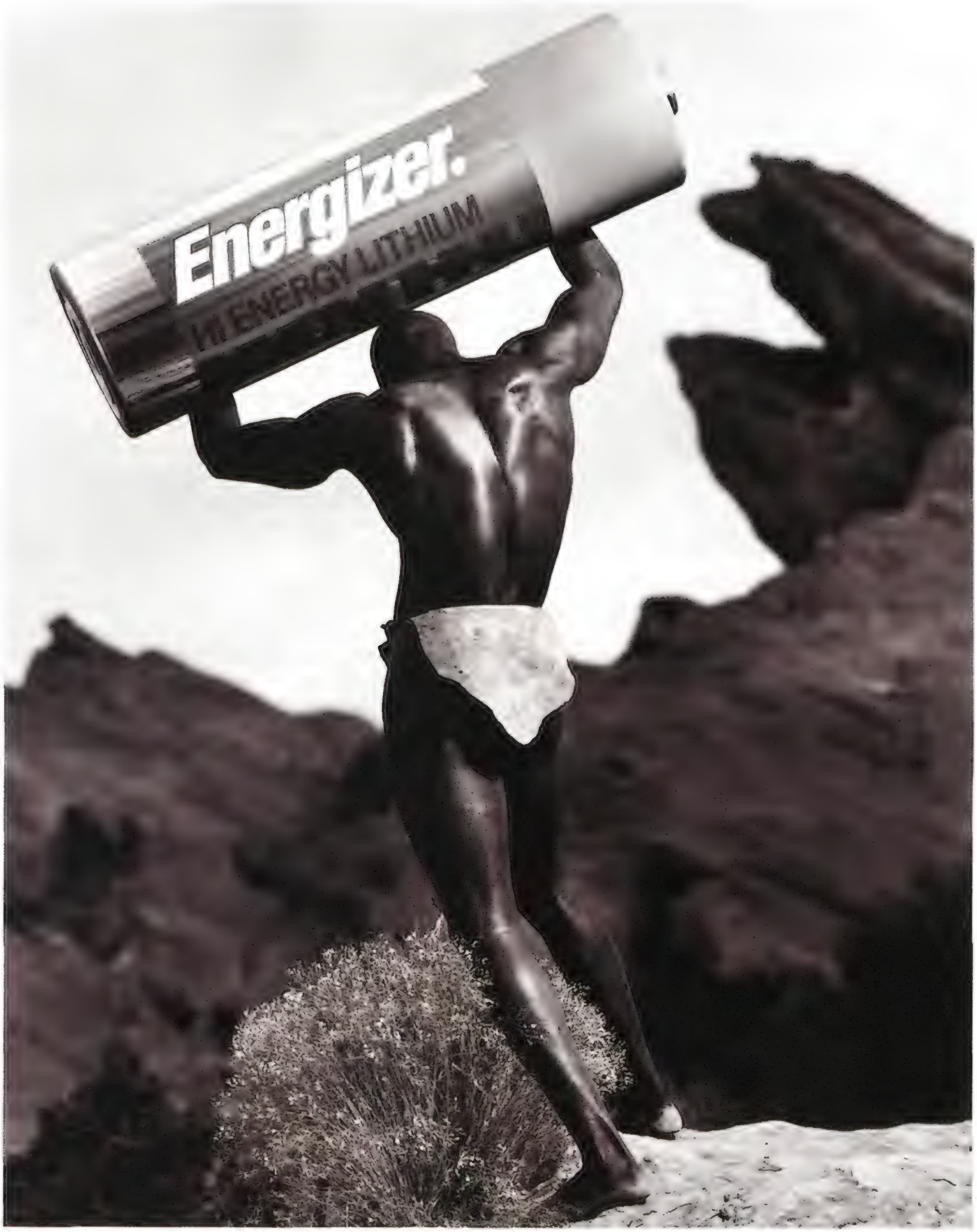
North of the Bouleuterion complex rose the Stoa, or covered colonnade, of Zeus, a religious shrine but apparently an excellent place to practice philosophy. Both Plato and Xenophon said that the Stoa of Zeus was a favorite teaching post of Socrates. No one is more closely associated with the Agora than Socrates. He lived his life here. He met his death here. Xenophon remembered his former teacher moving among the market tables and stoas: "he was always on public view; for early in the morning he used to go to the walkways and gymnasia, to appear in the agora as it filled up, and to be present wherever he would meet with the most people."

As much as Socrates enjoyed the public scene in the Agora, he made it clear, according to Plato, that he was not a "public" person, that is, he was not interested in politics. This was a scandalous opinion to hold in Athens, where the real work of every Athenian citizen was just that–being a citizen. In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates rounded on his critics: "Now do you really imagine that I could have survived all those years, if I had led a public life, supposing that . . . I had always supported the right and had made justice, as I ought, the first thing?"

He had learned the hard way. Allotted to a turn in the Bouleuterion in 406-05 B.C., he was assigned to the Tholos as a member of the executive committee. And thus it fell to Socrates to preside over a wild meeting of the mass Athenian Assembly when word arrived of the sea battle at Arginusae. It was an Athenian win, but the victorious generals were accused of leaving their own dead and dying behind. The majority moved to condemn the generals to death as a group without individual trials. Socrates resisted. "Serving in the Boule and having sworn the bouleutic oath [to serve in accordance with the law], and being in charge of the Assembly, when the People wished to put all nine [actually eight of the ten] generals to death by a single vote, contrary to the laws, he refused to put the vote," according to Xenophon. "He considered it more important to keep his oath than to please the People by doing wrong."

That was the sort of behavior that could earn you a great many enemies. Eventually, three citizens brought charges against Socrates for mocking the gods and corrupting Athenian youth. The exact location of the courtroom where Socrates stood trial still eludes identification, but the place of his indictment, the Royal Stoa, has been excavated. As for the place of his death, if you hunt care-

Today the landscaped Agora is an archaeological park. Centerpiece of view toward east is reconstructed Stoa of Attalos. Built in the 2d century B.C., the great portico was restored in 1950s to house offices, museum.



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Marble stele, dated 337-36 B.C., bears a relief that shows Democracy crowning Demos (the people of Athens).

fully on the rising slope beyond the Tholos, you can find the low precinct of exposed stones that archaeologists believe was the site of his demise.

The precise forces and circumstances that led to the jury's death sentence have never been elucidated completely. What is clear is that the questions raised by that trial so long ago are not dead letters. Dissent versus consent, public good versus private conscience, they still buzz about the ears of modern democracies. "I am the gadfly which the god has given the state," Socrates told his jury in the *Apology*, "and all day long and in all places am always fastening upon you, arousing and persuading and reproaching you."

The Athenian Agora still buzzes with surprises and mysteries. In 1981, on the northern edge of the Agora, Princeton archaeologist T. Leslie Shear jr. hit the corner of one of the most famous buildings of ancient Athens, the Poikile, or Painted, Stoa. This discovery was stunning good news for Agora archaeology. The structure had been renowned throughout the ancient world for its spectacular wall paintings. The glowing images, covering enormous wooden panels, lionized Athenian victories both mythological (over the Amazons, for instance) and historical (over the Persians at Marathon).

The fabled paintings were removed by the Romans in the fourth century A.D. but survived long enough to have been described by the second-century A.D. chronicler Pausanias. "The last part of the painting," he recorded, "consists of those who fought at Marathon. . . . In the inner part of the fight the barbarians are fleeing and pushing one another into the marsh; at the extreme end of the painting are the Phoenician ships and the Greeks killing the barbarians who are tumbling into them."

For Athenians, the Painted Stoa was the arena of their triumphs made visible. It was also a hotbed of philosophical speculation, eventually turning up as the gathering place of the third-century B.C. followers of Zeno of Citium. Zeno preached that the wise man should remain indifferent to the vanities of the transient world. The people of Athens associated the school of thought with the building, calling Zeno's disciples Stoics and their philosophy Stoicism. And 2,300 years later, so do we.

Stoicism is a necessity in Agora archaeology. As Leslie Shear explains, his father had, in some ways, an easier time of it here. The elder Shear supervised the original excavations during the 1930s. He had a squad of colleagues and 200 paid workmen to take down a whole neighborhood at a time. This summer, Shear has John Camp, his coinvestigator and colleague of 25 years, a nine-week season, and 33 student volunteers (American, Canadian and British) in addition to a small crew of Greek workmen who handle the heavy machinery and earthmoving. And he has his wife, Ione, a highly trained archaeologist in her own right, who has also worked at the site for 25 years.

Pursuing the Agora in the present Athens real estate market is tedious and expensive. It is house-to-house archaeology—negotiation, demolition and then excavation. While he has been busy elsewhere on the site, Shear is still waiting patiently to acquire the five-story building that is standing on the rest of the Painted Stoa.

Meanwhile, every water jug, bone or loom weight excavated anywhere in the Agora must receive a numbered tag. Every number goes into the dig's records, meticulously kept in special 4-by-6-inch clothbound notebooks. When in use in the field, these notebooks reside in an old, cheap suitcase that sits on a rough wooden desk that looks even older and cheaper. With a folding umbrella for shade, this is the nerve center for the dig. The senior archaeologists sit here, drawing tiny diagrams of the strata and the find location for every tagged item.

May 28, 1931: "H. A. Thompson commenced . . ."

It is, as Camp puts it, "dinosaur-age" archaeology in the era of field computers, but it works. Completed notebooks go into filing cabinets in offices inside the Stoa of Attalos. (This colonnade, originally a great commercial arcade in the second century B.C., was completely reconstructed in the 1950s to house the excavation's museum, laboratories, offices and storage vaults.) There the records march back in unbroken order through the decades to May 28, 1931, and the very first entry: "In the afternoon, H. A. Thompson commenced the supervision of Section A."

Looking back over more than 60 years, from the other side of the Atlantic, Homer Thompson smiled when he heard again that clipped description of the first day. He was a young, relatively inexperienced archaeologist then. Today he is a vigorous professor emeritus at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. He oversaw the Agora excavations from 1947 to 1967.

Back in the '30s, he recalls, it took seven years to find the first boundary stone that used the word "Agora." It wasn't a thrill so much as a relief, says Thompson, who was in charge of the crew that uncovered the marker, wedged in by the wall of Simon the cobbler's shop. "We believed we were working in the Agora, but we had so little to show for it—in inscriptions—that some of our colleagues would come by and ask 'How do you know that you're in the Agora?' Well, this settled it."

Finding the second boundary stone took another 30 years. The marker lies on the southwest corner of the square. Ione Shear uncovered it one afternoon in 1967.

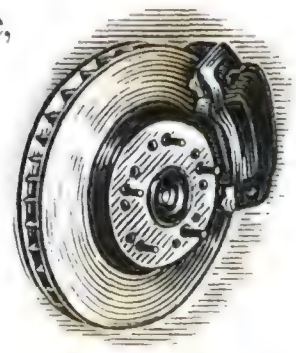
It is a very ordinary marble block. The faintly visible lettering runs across the top and then down one side. The important thing, says Leslie Shear, is that this block and the one found near Simon's shop have not been moved in 2,500 years. Other boundary stones have been found uprooted, buried in rubble fill. "But these two stand where they've stood since the sixth century B.C.," he observes. "They were set out at about the time the democracy was founded. In a very real sense, democracy as we understand it was invented in the Agora of Athens." He leaned down to trace the letters.

Stones can speak, although they rarely speak in the first person. This one spoke loud and clear: "I am the boundary of the Agora." There was no dispute after that. This was the word. This was the place.

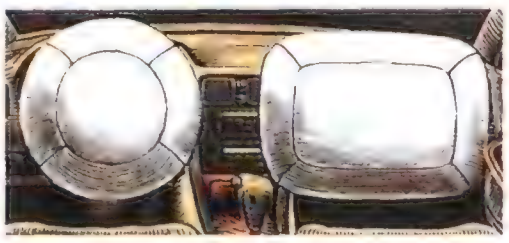
Yet other voices speak to me as well—the departed shades who throng this precinct. Pericles with his vision of a shining city on a hill. Thucydides writing his excoriating, brilliant history of the Peloponnesian War. Socrates framing his subversive questions. Plato discoursing on the nature of reality. This was their province, the empty square where I stand as twilight descends and shadows gather.

The imposing marble peristyle of the 5th-century B.C. Hephaisteion caps hill west of the Agora. Renowned Doric temple was jointly dedicated to Hephaestus and Athena, cardinal deities of Athenian civilization.

Let's not mince words. The 1993 Lexus LS 400 luxury sedan has indeed gained some weight — 99 pounds, to be exact. Yet, even if you scrutinize every line and every curve with a hypercritical eye, you won't find an ounce of fat. (We know, we already did it.)



What you will find, however, are some significant changes that help make this year's LS 400 an even stronger presence on the road.



Let's start at the bottom: We added wider, lower-profile tires, larger, 16-inch aluminum-alloy wheels and bigger ventilated disc brakes. We even added a passenger's-side airbag to match the one on the driver's side.*

Subtle refinements, perhaps, but your

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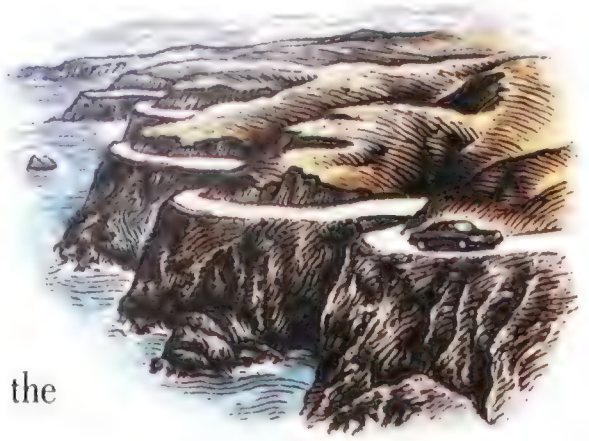
*the airbags will not inflate. **This 0-60 mph performance capacity figure is for comparison only, and was obtained with prototype vehicles under*

response to them may not be so subtle. You'll be able to grip the road more aggressively, stop more confidently and, overall, feel more powerful. A lot more powerful.



Of course, as always, the real source of power comes straight from the engine itself: a 250-horsepower, 32-valve V8, now with a more compact throttle body and lighter fuel injectors, to help move you from 0-60 in 7.9 seconds** — quite smoothly and quietly, we might add.

We made these refinements to the 1993 LS 400 for a very simple reason: We wanted a luxury sedan that was as strong as it was beautiful. After all, we're not only obsessed with our weight. We're obsessed with perfection.

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Lovingly resurrected icon of bygone era, searing red '46 Ford convertible gleams with a showroom sheen at entrance to yet another nostalgia-freighted emblem, the drive-in movie theater in El Monte, California.

By Richard Wolkomir

They're chromey, bright, zoomy– and they thunder

Boyd Coddington's rolling sculptures evoke a time when cars were cars and men were, to put it mildly, nuts about them

"Nobody wants to get old," says Boyd Coddington, twisting CheZoom's ignition key.

He is explaining why ostensibly mature men and the occasional woman buy his hyperpowered, handmade ultracars like CheZoom. But he omits a point: these cars are red-hot American icons. And they are one nifty way to show off.

CheZoom starts like a bomb detonating.

Boyd pulls back on the one-of-a-kind gearshift, designed specifically for CheZoom, and the 350-cubic-inch V-8 engine rumbles, the sound of P-51s flying low over the horizon—300 horsepower. The ground shakes. Boyd eases CheZoom out of the Hot Rods by Boyd workshops complex onto Monroe Avenue, an industrial byway in Stanton, California, near Los Angeles.

Men emerge from the chemical supply company across the street to watch, and from Lloyd's Crane and Hoist next door. Just standing still, CheZoom is a spectacle: a teal 1957 Chevrolet that looks as if it had gone to heaven and been beatified.

Hot rod megastar—and CEO

"The nice thing is, it still looks like a '57 Chevy," Boyd says, sitting low on the handcrafted leather-and-fabric seat, peering out the slit of a windshield at the avenue that stretches ahead like a runway. He is a burly 48-year-old former Idaho farm boy who wears Hawaiian shirts and a mountainman beard. He looks like a good-natured biker who went to finishing school.

Appearances deceive. Besides being a hot rod megastar, he is an entrepreneur and CEO who wakes up in the wee hours worrying about his 115-employee payroll and wanders down to the shops at 4:30 A.M. to fuss over prenatal rods. He works until 10 at night, taking calls on telephones in his car and in his various offices in the complex's several buildings. CheZoom is an illusion, too. It only looks like a '57 Chevy—it is subtly longer and lower, sleek as a leopard shark. It's all in the detail and proportion: the tail fins are more herculean and so are the doors. The windshield slants back just so. And the car's smoothly curving lines are uninterrupted by chrome or door handles.

"Part of the front fenders and part of the trunk were from a real '57 Chevy," Boyd says.

The rest is from Boyd and his craftsmen: the chassis, the wheels, the body, the window glass. A real '57 Chevrolet would have had perhaps 5 coats of paint. CheZoom has had 30 coats of the world's finest automotive lacquers, meticulously applied by expert hands. The engine is a Corvette LT1, fresh from the factory—Boyd says souping up today's high-performance engines is superfluous, and with a factory-bought engine, parts for repairs are no worry. Even the engine has been colored teal, and it is clean enough for brain surgery. The chassis, although you can't see it unless you crawl under, is teal. So are the shock absorbers and springs. Every washer and bolt has been lovingly worked over.

CheZoom was built for Cleveland industrialist Joe Hrudka, who collects '57 Chevys. Cars like this take a year or more to move through the Boyd workshops. And they cost from $50,000 up to $500,000. Mostly up to.

"Sometimes I do get the urge to stomp on it," says Boyd, peering through the windshield.

If he did, the tires would spin and smoke, and the car would disappear up the street like an artillery shell. But he doesn't. He presses lightly against the handcrafted gas pedal, and CheZoom rolls regally, grumbling in bass. Vietnamese men and boys and old women hurrying toward the markets in nearby Little Saigon (SMITHSONIAN, August 1992) turn to watch the car circle the block and drive back into the Boyd complex, where a British TV crew is videotaping the arrival to edify their fellow hot rod enthusiasts.

British hot-rodders? A hot rod that costs more than a Rolls-Royce? Driven slow?

"It used to be about racing, but now these cars are very safe," says Boyd. "We have aircraft-type welds."

And safety belts. Also air conditioning, fancy audio gear, electric door and window openers. Windshield wipers that retract out of sight under an electronically controlled panel on the hood. The car's controls are hidden in the glove compartment so that the instrument panel is classic and smooth, seemingly preelectronic.

Welcome to the international, all-American hot rod re-

Convertible's interior boasts a hand-wrapped leather steering wheel, machined-aluminum dashboard casing.

Photographs by Lucinda Lewis

Hot rod creator Boyd Coddington, who looks part Beach Boy, part friendly bear, oversees an enterprise that produces extravaganzas like CheZoom, a handmade hybrid of a '57 Chevy, resplendent in 30 coats of teal.

vival. For those who last saw a hot rod about the time that real '57 Chevys were rolling off the General Motors assembly line, it takes getting used to.

To underscore that point, may our author, seated beside Boyd in CheZoom, interject a personal note?

It is four decades ago, in the Age of James Dean. I am a little kid. Up the street in our Hudson River factory town lives a mechanically minded teenager with a crew cut and greasy fingers. And he has a car that seems to me the most desirable object in the galaxy.

It is a '32 Ford roadster, the hot rod favorite, a Deuce. This car looks mean. It has no fenders. It is weathered black. The trunk lid is held down with wire. The windshield has been chopped to a slit. The wheels in back are bigger than the wheels in front, so that the car noses down. Its hood is gone to bare the engine, a huge souped-up mechanism encrusted with chrome, blatting through dual straight-pipe exhausts.

One morning, probably because I look pathetic gazing at this beloved object, the big guy takes me for a ride down an alley. He snap-shifts from first into second, not using the clutch, just meshing the gears by feel like an expert safecracker. We are rocketing along, making a wonderful roar.

"It doesn't have brakes," he says.

I ask the obvious question.

He sniggers, "Like this."

He double-clutches down into first, and the car slows, screaming. Then, giggling like a maniac, he bumps it against a tree.

That is how he stops.

And that was hot-rodding's golden age, when reckless teens would race these overpowered wrecks at night on back roads, Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly pounding from the radio. Sometimes the stakes were the registration papers.

I yearned for a Deuce. But I had no mechanical aptitude, not a clue to souping up, chopping, channeling. I couldn't even change oil. When I was in college I acquired a considerably used 1956 Ford that some previous owner had fiddled with, and for a while, on the city's main street at night, I'd drag race local hot-rodders from stoplight to stoplight, shades of *American Graffiti.*

The Ford finally coughed its last, and I forgot about hot rods. But just recently I read that a hot rod revival is going on, partly sparked by the stunning cars made by Boyd Coddington. Once again I felt like the kid coveting the nasty Deuce up the street. I had to fly to California to see what hot-rodding had become.

It has become, I discovered, such things as CadZZilla.

Boyd Coddington built CadZZilla for Billy Gibbons, a member of the rock band ZZ Top. Think of the Batmobile, only infinitely more gorgeous–the color of an eggplant, all curves, a little sinister, oozing luxuriousness.

The idea was to produce a car of both the 1990s and an earlier era, too. CadZZilla is a 1948 Cadillac totally reconstructed so that it retains all the flavor of the original–a Cadillac designer figured the curves. But it looks far more dramatic, entirely smooth, so that, as Boyd likes to say of his cars, "there aren't any hiccups to catch your eye." But CadZZilla keeps the Cadillac motif. For example, Boyd's craftsmen cut up the original ivory-colored plastic steering wheel to make the control knobs. The front bumper is from a '55 Chevy, but the bulletlike bumper guards from the original Cadillac have been transformed into fendertop rearview mirrors, which double as door handles.

Boyd makes traditional rods, too. His shop is full of Deuce roadsters and coupes, and '33 and '34 Fords as well, being transformed into machines that look just like the ugly beast my teenage neighbor roared around in back home. Except that these rods are sleek and smooth, impeccably clean, with precision-machined parts and deluxe interiors. And they have excellent brakes.

One afternoon Gray Baskerville, senior editor at *Hot Rod* magazine and an old-time rodder himself, happens to drop in at Hot Rods by Boyd, where I am hanging around. I ask him how hot-rodding got where it is today.

"Henry Ford was the first hot-rodder–he used to race the cars he built, and his motto was 'Win on Sunday, Sell on Monday,'" Gray says, leaning back in one of Boyd's chairs and getting a distant look in his eye. "But it really happened in Southern California in the 1920s."

The climate was friendly to roadsters, which were plentiful. The fledgling aerospace industry supplied technology. And the movie industry churned out money–stars and moguls commissioned fancy custom cars, and the builders turned out cheaper versions for teenagers in their spare time. California also had dry lake beds, like Muroc, where the space shuttles now land. Starting in the 1920s, hundreds of youths converged at the lake beds on weekends to race hopped-up Model T's and Model A's. Probably medieval Camelot's squires had skulked out, too, to drag race their knights' war horses. But the hot rod was a peculiarly American expression of the teenage male's hormonal itch for danger and speed: it was noisy, rebellious and all about fooling around with machines. Tinkering.

"We used to run at Muroc in the 1930s and the early '40s until the Air Force moved us out, and then we moved to El Mirage dry lake, 30 miles away," Gray says. "And they're still racing there once a month, running against the clock, under the auspices of the Southern California Timing Association." After World War II,

After his visit to Boyd Coddington's workshops, Richard Wolkomir still has trouble telling the difference between a spark plug and a carburetor.

drag racing became a national phenomenon on abandoned military airstrips.

In the 1950s, rodding began to emerge from the teenage underground. The business took off after a Hollywood publicist got the bright idea of starting *Hot Rod* magazine, which spread the gospel nationwide and across the ocean, too—many of Boyd Coddington's top craftsmen are Swedes. The magazine's first editor started the National Hot Rod Association to sanitize the scruffy "sport."

"The old highboy roadsters began to die out because they're not comfortable where it's cold; rodders began to gravitate to later-model passenger cars with heaters, like the '55 Chevy," says Gray, a purist who still drives a hopped-up Deuce roadster.

Detroit began to eye the hot rod phenomenon. Chevrolet, for instance, offered its 1955 model with dual exhausts and a souped-up engine. But the Detroit-made rods were not real rods. "A hot rod is a car modified by the owner or an agent of the owner, like Boyd Coddington, so that it looks better and performs better," Gray says. "You make it faster so you can smoke the other guy—it's a chariot race."

For a while, rodding succumbed to Detroit's new zeal for factory-made "muscle cars," with jumbo engines designed to get teenagers' testosterone pumping. But by the 1970s, insurance problems and poor fuel mileage were phasing out the mass-produced muscle cars. Meanwhile, a few incorrigible rodders like Gray Baskerville had continued blatting around in their chopped Deuces.

Coddington designer Chip Foose touches up a clay model to perfect the lines of a roadster-in-the-making.

"They're obnoxious," he says serenely. "The appeal is audio as well as video." And a few underground L.A. car artists like George Barris and Ed Roth were turning out exquisitely streamlined custom cars, rolling sculptures. Hot-rodders tended to dismiss these looks-over-speed custom cars as "lead sleds." But then along came Boyd Coddington. He put the two things together—rods and custom cars—and added high-tech, modern automobile engineering.

"Boyd's number one—he's the Stradivarius of car building," says Gray.

It began on an Idaho farm, where Boyd idolized his hot-rodding older brother. "I'd be riding to church with my mother, reading *Hot Rod*," he says. His father disapproved. "His thing was cows—no chrome."

Part Model A, part Buick: a chimera

When he was 13, Boyd traded his shotgun for a '31 Chevrolet pickup truck. His father made him trade it back. But then he built himself an automotive chimera, a Model A roadster in front and a 1923 Buick in back, all on a Model A frame and powered by a Ford flathead engine. By the time he was 15, Boyd had traded and tinkered his way through ten cars.

He left high school for trade school, where he developed a lifelong fascination with lathes and milling machines. Then he returned to high school for his diploma, but mostly hung out with other car guys and skipped classes to crawl under his latest chassis. He apprenticed for three years at a Salt Lake City machine shop. Then, in 1967, he made a beeline for hot-rodding's galactic center, Los Angeles.

"I came because I knew the cars were here," he says.

He worked as a machinist at a gear company and then took a maintenance job at Disneyland. In 1971 he married Diane Ragone, a nurse.

"There was never one mention of the word 'hot rod,'" says Diane, who balances Boyd's taciturnity with all-stops-out extroversion. "Then, about six months after we were married, one morning he says, 'I'm going to buy me a tall-T.'"

She thought it might be some sort of fancy drink. Actually it was a 1915 vintage car that Boyd bought for $300. "It arrived in three truckloads," he says. "My Italian mother-in-law had a fit." But he restored the car in his backyard and astonished his mother-in-law by selling it for $10,000. "You should have heard her brag," he says. Restoring and customizing cars became Boyd's consuming backyard hobby.

"I thought he was crazy," says Diane. But after a few shows, Boyd entered one of his cars in the judging. The judge called his number—the winner.

"He just sat there," Diane says. "I said, 'Boyd, you've got to go up onstage,' but he said, 'No, you go,' so I went

Inside Hot Rods by Boyd workshop, craftsman welds chassis of the Road Star, lookalike of '37 Ford roadster with refinements never dreamed up by Detroit. Scale drawing behind him guides car's team of creators.

up and collected all this stuff." She was laden with trophies, and Boyd helped her down from the edge of the stage. "He got that far, anyway," Diane says.

By 1974, Boyd was talking about building cars as a business. He suggested they move to a house with a larger garage for his car shop. "I had a beautiful home, and I said, 'No way, Jose!'" says Diane.

Boyd is quiet but purposeful. Eventually he found a house with a large yard where he could put up a garage.

"We stood on the sidewalk in front of that place and had an immense argument," Diane recalls. "He said, 'You don't have farsightedness.' And I don't—all I saw was a crummy house."

But they moved in. Soon his business had grown so large that he moved it down the street to the complex that is now Hot Rods by Boyd. "Clients would fly in and were welcome to stay in our back bedroom—after all, we're all part of the same family endeavor," says Diane. "Often I'd come home from church, and a new set of clients would be moving in. The wonderful thing about having the shop at home was that clients could sneak out back in the middle of the night to take a peek at their babies. It's like watching your child grow." The hot rods became so popular that Boyd opened a spin-off business, Boyds Wheels, making unique automobile wheels that shine like mirrors for drivers who want to give their showroom cars a hint of the Boyd Coddington look. Diane and Boyd still live in the same house. But a Boyd-made car is rarely in the driveway. "As soon as I make one, somebody buys it," he shrugs.

Hot-rodding has progressed. "It used to be a Hell's Angels thing—when I started out, the bank looked at that word 'hot rod' and didn't want to give me a business loan, and the city of Stanton didn't want to give me a business license," Boyd says. But his customers are mostly successful middle-aged men who join hot rod clubs to show off their cars and talk about dual carbs and frenched headlights with kindred spirits, and who vie for trophies in hot rod beauty contests. They are nostalgic for their daredevil youth. They want to re-create the cars they had then or the ones they dreamed of. But now they want them safe, with all the comforts. And each hot rod must be one of a kind, starting with the design.

"We got the idea of making a 1937 Ford coupe into a fenderless roadster, which had never been done," says Chip Foose, who left a job with a design firm that served

Steve Coonan

Sleek and show-stopping CadZZilla, a monster rod based on a 1948 Cadillac and created for a member of the ZZ Top rock group, bears a license plate toasting car's fire-breathing, cinematic namesake: "I 8 Tokyo."

major auto manufacturers to become a Hot Rods by Boyd designer.

The new car–Road Star–will be a "phantom," a seeming reconstruction of a car that Detroit has never actually built. "We're making it seven-eighths scale because the 1937 coupe was too massive," says Chip. "And we'll put small tires in front, so we're making the body a wedge, big in back, small in front, like the tires–proportions make a car." Road Star first began to take shape on a sketch pad. "Every line has to have the flavor of an original '37 Ford."

A Florida developer signed on as the car's owner. Chip then perfected the lines on a clay model. Road Star is now being built, from the chassis up, with a hand-formed aluminum body and entirely new parts, including a Cadillac North Star 32-valve V-8 engine fresh from the factory. "It's going to be a little rocket," says Chip.

Enlarging the clay model's dimensions, workers produced a plywood-and-foam mockup, over which they will hammer and roll the car's aluminum skin. They will stop hammering and filing only when each section fits precisely. Meanwhile, in the frame shop, chassis engineer Dave Willey says he designed the low car's chassis so that nothing hangs down underneath. Wires and cooling fluids will run through pipes that have been integrated into the chassis' steel beams.

Eventually, workers will bolt the body sections onto the frame to make sure everything fits. Then they will disassemble it again, ready for the paint shop. Lacquer will go onto the body coat by coat, to be sanded and resanded and made gemlike. "It's the highest-quality finish you can get," says Chip.

One afternoon I watch the craftsmen working on Road Star's parts in their separate shops. The workshops are spotless, like hospital operating rooms. Each craftsman works alone, silently. They might be monks from some esoteric automotive order, expressing spirituality by making perfect fenders and bumpers.

The car's owner-to-be, developer Otto (Buz) DiVosta, has flown in from Florida to check on their progress. He looks happy.

"At a young age I was interested in anything mechanical. And at a place like this, all the dreams you had as a young person, you can make happen," he says. "Actually, I'd been thinking about a '32 Ford roadster, but when Boyd showed me the picture of this car I couldn't control myself–it's a modern-day street rod."

He raced cars when he was young, but speed is no longer the appeal, declares DiVosta: "I won't be starting from a light and making smoke all over the place–what I like is the quality."

Tycoons drive these cars. So do celebrities such as rock musician Eddie Van Halen, who had a pickup truck designed here to match his guitar's garish colors. But not all of Boyd's customers are famous, nor are they all multimillionaires.

"I'm fortunate to live near Boyd," says computer sales agent Stan Reeves one afternoon when he stops in to snap pictures of his still-fetal '34 Ford coupe. To shave costs, the body is being constructed of prefabricated fiberglass. "It's an illness and there is no cure," Stan tells me, explaining that one of his earliest memories is of sitting on his race-driver father's lap back in Colorado, going around a closed-car track and smelling the acrid smoke of burning alcohol fuel.

"There are about three levels of quality in hot-rodding, and I'm finally graduating to the highest level," he says. "It's not because you want to burn the tires off making a spectacle of yourself–most of us are in our mid-40s or older, and we have too much invested in these cars to behave like 16-year-olds."

Still, under his car's hood will be a new, high-potency

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Corvette engine. Even if you don't gun a Coddington hot rod, it's a pleasure knowing what would happen if you did. But buyers like other features, too. Stan points to the car's custom-designed gas pedal: "I could hang that on my wall."

Nobody knows how many aficionados hot rods have today. Gray Baskerville says his magazine's monthly circulation is about 850,000. And the teenage hot rod culture has curiously altered. For one thing, modern anti-pollution laws and chip-controlled engines have virtually ruled out the old craze for souping-up factory engines under the elm tree in your backyard on a Saturday afternoon. "Kids today are more into modifications for looks, and they're working with different cars, like mini-pickups, or maybe Mustangs or Camaros from the late '70s," says Gray. "They'll change the paint job or add pinstripes–or lower them–or put on new tire-and-wheel combinations, or they'll get a lift kit to make the truck stand up high with big tires, which is just the opposite of the old hot rods."

Drag racing between stoplights has dwindled, too. "What we used to call the 'Stoplight Grand Prix' is just about gone because cities put in these anticruising ordinances," says Gray. "If a cop sees you coming down the street too many times in a suspicious-looking car, he gives you a ticket." He adds that some street dragging still goes on clandestinely, late at night, with huge sums wagered–probably proceeds from drug sales.

Meanwhile, aging hot-rodders who have begun to earn high salaries can move up to higher and higher levels of hot rod perfection until they arrive at Boyd Coddington's door. But there are men who hot-rod only in their hearts.

"Once I was driving down Sunset, and a stretch limo pulled up alongside–down goes the window," Gray says.

"Nice '32 roadster," the limo man told Gray. "When I was back in medical school I wanted one exactly like that, and now I can afford it–go ahead, name your price."

"It's not for sale," Gray answered.

"I don't blame you," sighed the limo man, rolling up his window and gliding away.

Gray says hot-rodding has spread overseas, especially to Sweden, Britain, Australia and New Zealand. In Germany, Italy and France, he says, restrictions keep hot rods off the roads. But Brad Fanshaw, vice president of the Boyd enterprises, says the company's most faraway customer was "a gentleman from Kuwait."

Rodding's renaissance infuriates antique-car collectors. They accuse the rodders of depleting the supply of classic cars, turning them into Frankenstein's monsters. "We're the butchers," says Gray Baskerville, complacently. "Everything they do is by the book, an exact replica, and that's the antithesis of a hot rod–who cares?"

He points out that most cars that will be turned into hot rods come from junkyards. "Hot-rodders get the leavings," he says, noting that a hot rod's starting hulk is usually too far gone for restoration anyway. "Besides, most antiquers want the rarest body styles, while hot-rodders want the lightest."

Some rods are never-driven collector's items–"garage queens." But owners who buy rods to drive have all sorts of reasons for doing so. Brad Fanshaw cites a Beverly Hills man who sold his Ferrari because friends sneered at him for being ostentatious. Now he drives a Coddington hot rod. It cost as much as a Ferrari, "but he feels a lot better driving it," says Brad. Also, unlike a Ferrari, each rod is unique. "We're a nation of individualists," says Gray. But the biggest lure may be the teenager within: hot rods reek of speed and wildness. "Big toys for big boys," Gray says. "We're a car culture, and these things are the essence of car–they're chromey, bright, zoomy, and they thunder!"

Major manufacturers study hot rods. Boyd has built original "concept" cars for such companies as Dodge, Chevrolet, Ford, Isuzu, Mitsubishi and Hyundai. And in the past decade he has earned an unprecedented six top awards at the Oakland Roadster Show, the Oscars of the hot-rodding world.

But Boyd has experienced disillusionment, too. It involved Al Jardine, of the Beach Boys, the long-lived rock group that recorded Boyd's favorite song, "Little Deuce Coupe." Jardine asked Boyd to build him a Woody, the wood-sided antique station wagon early surfers used for hauling their boards and gear. "But you should have a Deuce coupe!" Boyd told him. The singer of hot-rodding's anthem seemed puzzled. "Well, maybe," he said. "But what do they look like?"

Born-again 1933 Ford, raised to a glory Henry himself never foresaw, sports hand-painted flames, CD player.

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By Steven Barboza

A mural program to turn graffiti offenders around

When Philadelphia's Anti-Graffiti Network puts former scrawlers to work beautifying the walls they've trashed, everybody wins

Jane Golden (opposite) and a trio of former graffiti writers finish a mural on the history of immigration.

Densely scrawled wall in north Philadelphia (above) is one of many awaiting Anti-Graffiti Network brushes.

A few hundred yards from the lazy Schuylkill River in downtown Philadelphia, three would-be Henri Rousseaus, paint in hand, climb off an embankment and set up shop in their workaday world: a scaffold along Route 76. In what is virtually a high-wire act above a highway, they block out expressway noise to paint a 150-by-40-foot cement wall, bringing to life a steamy jungle scene fit for the zoo a few blocks away.

"It's kind of fun!" shouts Dietrich Adonis, standing 15 feet above eastbound traffic, clutching a beam with one hand and, with the other, dabbing yellow paint onto the neck of a giraffe. It joins zebras, a panda, a lion.

"Sometimes I'll take a break and watch the guys rowing in the river, watch the cars go by, and a school of ducks. It can put you in a meditative mood!" He smiles. Trucks roar by. The scaffold vibrates as if there's an earthquake.

Meanwhile, perched even higher over traffic, Jane Golden, in trademark bandana and paint-splotched jeans, stops outlining a gracefully curving leaf to give former graffiti artist Alfredo Ramos a few pointers on creating the jungle floor.

"Right here!" she shouts, pointing to an area of dense deep green. "Just do cross-hatching–a little this way and that way." As a fuel hauler rolls by, followed by a flatbed truck, Golden demonstrates with her brush. Ramos nods. Then both fall silent, lost in their work.

The daredevil artists' so-called "Zoo" mural, visible from cars, boats, planes and trains, is one of more than 1,200 inspired by the city's collective wish to blot out

Photographs by Roger Foley

Volunteer Carlos Wilson creates a new style in footwear as he rolls fresh paint over a wall writer's handiwork.

graffiti. Taken together, the murals are transforming Philadelphia from a spray-painter's paradise into a respectable outdoor art gallery.

For years, graffiti writers had free rein, and the city felt powerless to overcome their scourge. In the daily press, Philadelphians were obliged to follow the legendary exploits of scrawlers, including one bold enough to write his name on an elephant in the zoo.

But today, Philadelphia has scrawl at least somewhat under control. Buildings stay cleaner, thanks to an agency the city wields as its eraser: the Philadelphia Anti-Graffiti Network. Part government agency, part social service organization, part art workshop, it not only repaints the town in richer hues, but it cleans walls, fences-off vacant lots, mobilizes neighborhood volunteers and guides youths to better futures, including art school.

In 1984, at the start of his first term, Mayor W. Wilson Goode founded the Network as an amnesty program for wall writers. Graffiti-fighting ranked among his top priorities, and soon after taking office he pledged to win the war of the walls. As reporters watched, he pitched in, wearing overalls as he helped to paint over a recreation center buried in scrawl.

Goode's grass-roots appeal worked. More than 130 youngsters surrendered within a year, pledging to abandon their scribbling. Through the '80s, well over 70,000 volunteers and former wall writers joined them—or were caught and stopped. Officials claim that the Network has cut back graffiti by 50 percent. Each year the organization cleans about 4,000 properties, using 5,000 gallons of city-bought paint. The cost was some $39,000 last year, compared with $150,000 a year for paint in the '80s, when the war was at its height. Today, the Network has three basic programs: graffiti removal, mural art and art education, and youth employment. Young people get involved as volunteers, paid employees or offenders caught wall writing and sentenced to community service by the courts.

The Network, particularly its mural division, has transformed sections of Philadelphia, lending a bit of charm to staid middle-class neighborhoods, veneering eyesores in poorer areas, and bringing new life to sites where senseless shootings had taken place. In a section of the city called "the Ozone," a mural with mournful faces serves as

Freelance writer Steven Barboza is author of the forthcoming book American Jihad: Islam After Malcolm X, *due out next January from Doubleday.*

Local neighborhood youngsters Luvon Paulson and Marquise Mitchell (above) pitch in on a Network mural in north Philadelphia. *Boy with Raised Arm* (left), a reproduction of a painting by artist Sidney Goodman, has given a welcome boost to the adjacent car wash.

an epitaph for slain youngsters, their names listed in columns beneath the blood-red words "Stop the Violence." A similar mural at Seventh Street and Susquehanna Avenue in the East of Broad area contains the names of 35 youths, most of them shot dead in the past three years. Facing this mural is another, "Peace and Unity," with a Puerto Rican flag and a Bible, driving home a plea for peaceful coexistence on the city's mean streets.

The man who leads the program is 35-year-old Tim Spencer. Hired by Mayor Goode in 1984, he had never lost touch with the Philadelphia streets of his childhood, and so was well suited to the task of putting together the Network's programs. He grew up amid gangs, watching them do battle, hearing about acquaintances killed for stupid reasons.

"I call this hell," says Spencer, driving his city-owned sedan past the East of Broad mural, then by garbage-strewn lots and abandoned buildings. "We've worked extra hard over here in hell country because there's a lot of social problems and drugs–and not much hope."

Neighborhood residents appreciate the murals, some of which depict the faraway places people may wonder about but cannot afford to visit. Like giant postcards, they are windows on far prettier sights. A tropical garden sprouts from a cement wall; Mount Kilimanjaro towers majestically over rubble; beach scenes warm the heart on frigid days.

Working on as many as 12 projects each summer day, maybe half that in chillier weather, muralists shuttle paints and supplies and talent across the city; as the murals go up, the neighbors come out to watch art materializing on the dilapidated buildings next door. It's up to Jane Golden to find the walls and turn them into something wonderful to look at. It's also her job to get permission from owners and neighbors to paint.

"I'm a wall hunter," she laughs, jockeying her car through a city neighborhood, her beeper sounding from time to time. As she talks, she keeps her eyes peeled for potential sites. "We used to joke we were the art police–that's a good wall!" She's spotted a graffiti-scrawled building beside a vacant lot.

Today, Golden is seeking a site for a mural to be commissioned by a Philadelphia record producer who, like most businessmen, will pay for paint and materials. This 70-foot-wide wall is the side of an abandoned building; the adjacent lot is overrun by weeds. Canvassing from house to house, she rings doorbells and gets neighbors' permission, then asks three people near the street cor-

Energetic participants in the Network's 1992 Clean Sweep Games compete in the "4-way hand-pick" event.

ner. All three like the idea. "I think it's a great thing," says Johnny Scott, 69, who offers to store Network paint in his cellar. Mary Watson, 83, who has lived on the street for more than 30 years, says she wouldn't mind "something decent to look at." And, in perhaps the strongest vote of confidence, Patricia Jackson, who lives down the street, tries steering Golden her way: "The 1900 block needs something done, too."

It's evident that Philadelphians like their 1,200-plus Network murals, many of which rank as unofficial landmarks; the waiting list has swelled to more than 1,500 buildings. The mural that city dwellers associate most closely with the Network is nicknamed the "Colossus of Ridge Avenue." Rising 40 feet on the side of a three-story house and overlooking a fenced-off lot stands basketball legend Julius (Dr. J) Erving. Looking sharp in a double-breasted suit (p. 69), he contributes to traffic jams.

Unlike most of the murals, which are painted on-site, "Colossus" is actually a gigantic paint-by-numbers work. Young artists created it in a hotel room, dabbing millions of dots onto two-foot-square cutouts of parachute cloth that had been mapped out by California muralist Kent Twitchell (SMITHSONIAN, September 1990). When they fastened the squares onto the wall with acrylic gel, pointillism took over, integrating the dots seamlessly. Only then did the mural make perfect sense to its painters. Some people complained that Spencer shouldn't have put the mural near "one of the worst drug corners in the city." He answered by saying, "That's where you're supposed to put it." According to neighborhood residents, the lot in front of "Colossus," once strewn with debris, stays clean and has less drug traffic.

Another mural has brought attention to a corner lot that is as big as a football field–a place where many strata of Philadelphians meet. Nicknamed "Boy," the giant work on the side of Desmond Fladger's home at North 40th Street and Powelton Avenue has been called a "Third World Statue of Liberty." "I think it's an asset to the neighborhood," says Fladger. "It has a message there–that for young black males and females alike, we all have a chance." The 72-foot-wide mural is a reproduction of *Boy with Raised Arm*, an original painting by Sidney Goodman in the Franklin Mint collection. Goodman, who had conducted art workshops for the Network, offered to help with the mural of his painting.

"I was a little nervous having a fine artist like Goodman supervise my work," says Golden, who usually heads production herself and works with the community to create designs. Otherwise, the making of "Boy" was fairly typical. First, the design was divided into one-inch squares that were transformed into one-foot squares on the wall by using chalk lines. Then an overall sketch of "Boy" was drawn while Goodman supervised from the ground. The artist painted the face himself; the rest was done mainly by Network staff and crew, with neighborhood youngsters pitching in on the bottom sections.

"Boy" stands watch over the House of Clowns Car Wash, an outdoor soup kitchen, a vegetable patch and a flower garden–all on the site of a former gas station. The place is a refuge. Homeless people get free meals, and alcoholics and drug addicts earn money washing cars while they stay out of trouble, says car wash proprietor James (Mr. June) Liles.

"We try to keep the ground just as beautiful as the picture," adds Liles. "And that picture has brought so much peace and harmony. I have heard church people say here it seems like you're on holy ground."

Hit-and-run scrawlers hunt for bare spots

Perhaps more accurately, the mural, like others in Philadelphia, is a kind of demilitarized zone–a no-man's-land between muralists and graffitists. For the most part, scrawlers leave murals alone. But they also leave clear messages that they haven't given up the fight for control of the city's walls. "Kids write around murals–to let us know they could deface them but won't," says one former Network staffer. "It's a power struggle. We do a mural, then all of a sudden we get new graffiti–to let us know they are shadowboxing with us."

And graffiti still abounds. With ladders chained to their bikes or jutting out of car trunks, hit-and-run wall writers hunt for bare spots on which to empty several hundred cans of spray paint each month–on schools, stores, warehouses, underpasses, houses, churches, landmarks. Writers make inane proclamations on City Hall,

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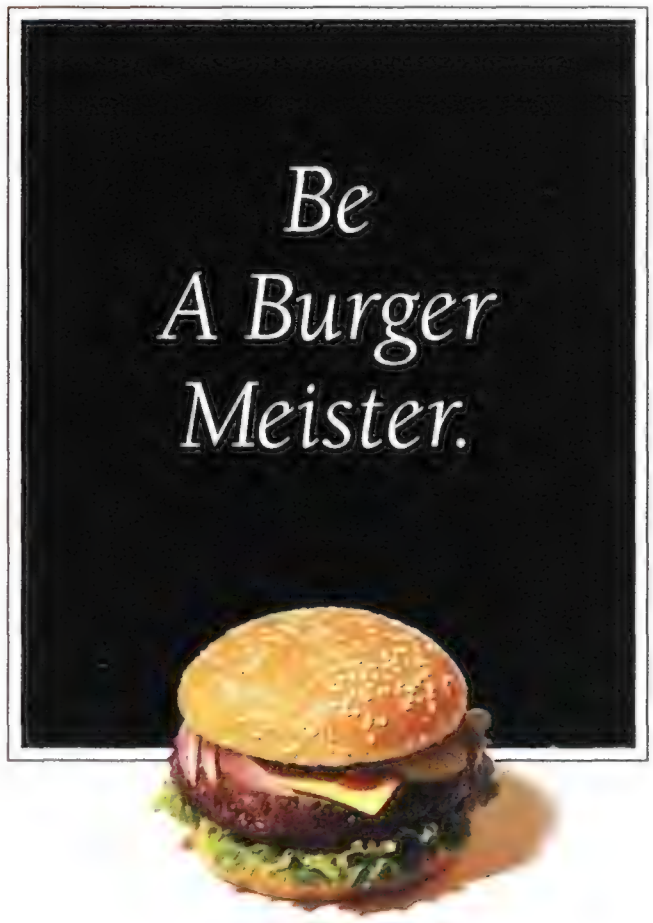

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Residents in the Gray's Ferry area of the city worked with Anti-Graffiti Network staff in choosing theme for this mural. Soothing landscape scenes are popular, as they provide visual relief on sweltering summer days.

declarations on Independence Hall. Their work even overlooks the grave of Ben Franklin.

Although there are some interesting graffiti compositions in vibrant neon colors, the great majority of graffiti are eyesores—paint sprayed onto walls in thick overlays of random scrawls. And artful or not, the owner of the wall has no say in the matter. Businesses are prime targets. The recent experience of a Philadelphia kitchen-equipment firm is typical: hit over a period of several nights, its walls and front gate were turned into a comic book. When he finished swearing, the exasperated manager got in touch with the Network, which has put his building on its mural waiting list.

Graffiti writers, who generally come out late at night, are mostly young males, although their ranks include older males and females as well. One female graffitist has made a name for herself by writing in only one color and in hazardous locations. Her style is recognizable and she signs her work; Network field representative Jonathan Heard has been trying to track her down.

Heard's sleuthing is often successful because he knows the world of the graffitists from the inside—in the early '70s he was among the better-known practitioners. Even after joining the Army he kept writing, scrawling graffiti on barracks walls. A lot of the writers admired him, he says, but as he grew older and became a father, he began to see himself in a new light.

After hearing of the Network's pledge of amnesty, Heard quit writing, and the local graffiti underworld lost a hero. "For the first two years I got a lot of negativity from them," he says. "It bothered me that when I was doing bad things they treated me like some kind of god, but when I started doing something good they hated me, calling me 'snitch' and 'turncoat.' Eventually people began to see that if I could turn my life around, so could they." Now, as a field rep, he is uniquely equipped to search out writers.

Heard has his work cut out for him. Young people still seek to build "rep"—their reputations—by performing daredevil acts with cans of paint: scaling tall buildings to "tag" them with their nicknames, venturing down subway tunnels or simply being brash—like the writer who reportedly scrawled "Brisk, Catch Me" across a police van.

In Philadelphia, a dozen or so writers reign among their peers as "kings" and "queens," graffiti's royalty, who have "accumulated many properties." Graffiti writers publish their own underground magazine, *Nastie English*. A bimonthly, it contains four-color photographs

of pieces on city walls, along with essays and reviews of hip-hop records. The graffiti-writing clubs meet regularly in subway stations. "We would call the pay phones to find out who was there," says Fred Scott jr., 25, a Network volunteer who abandoned graffiti and became a computer service engineer. Writers show up at subway meetings clutching sketchbooks that bulge with drafts of detailed plans of attack for a night's work. The writers talk shop, laugh over "war" stories, plan "bombing" raids, then disperse in squadrons across the city, leaving their tags around town: Knife. ERX. Slice. Joker.

"We wanted to be seen," says Scott of his street days, "so somebody came up with the great idea that if we walked the same route that the buses do, the kids in the morning would see our tags. We each went different routes, probably like 12 o'clock in the morning till 3, then went home, got up at 8 so we could be to school at 9. My mother never knew I was going out in the middle of the night."

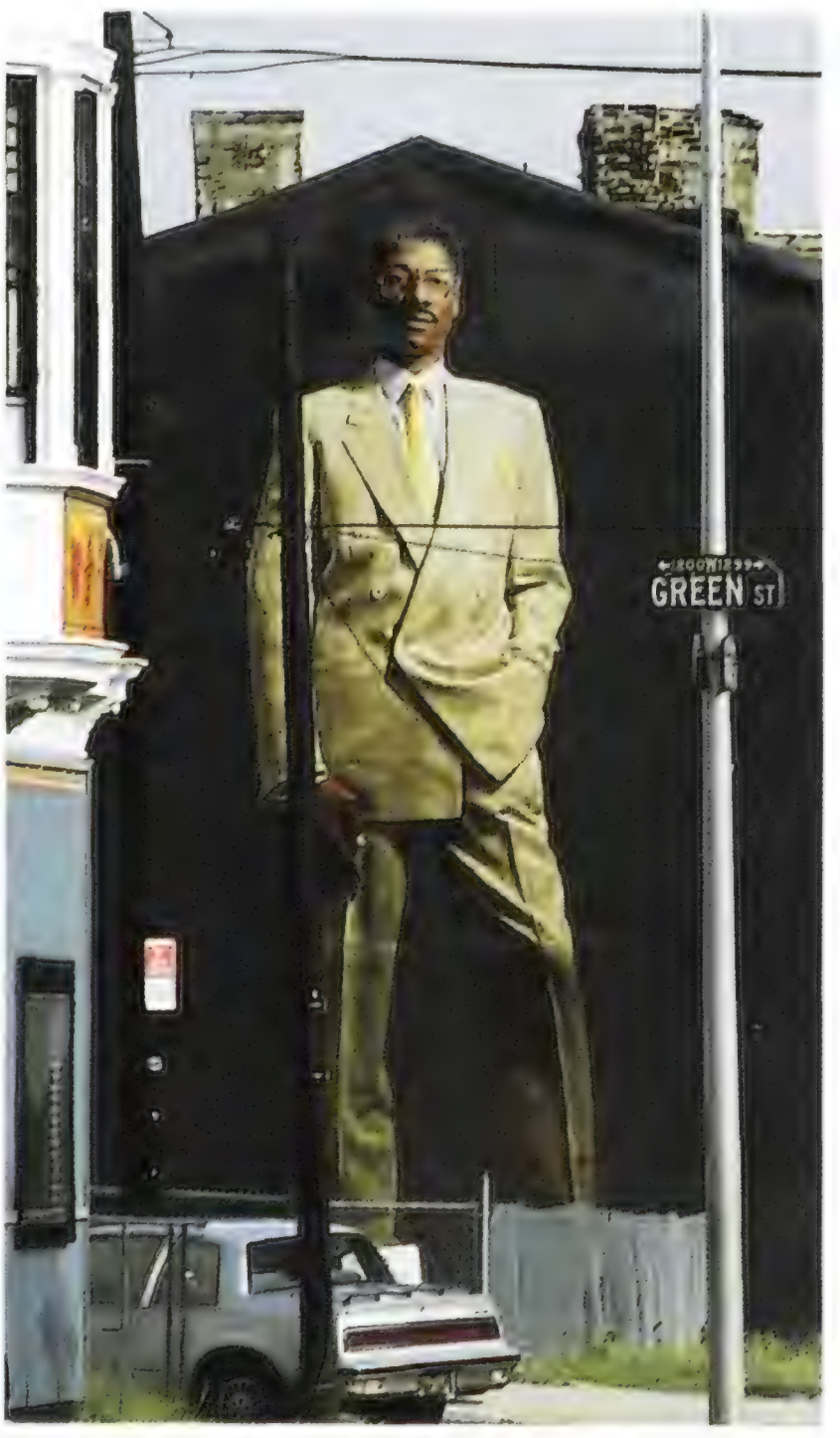
Heard and the other field reps comb the streets for local talent, even as the Network murals are being done to cover up the talents' work. The reps examine walls, trying to unmask the identities behind the mysterious tags. They visit suspected writers at home to try to persuade them to volunteer for Network duty before the police wise up to them. Often, field reps glean information from suspects by winning their confidence. They unmasked one notorious writer by first unmasking a friend of his and convincing him it was in his best interest to fink.

Field reps give their leads to a special police unit in the Juvenile Aid Division, established in 1985 to track down hard-core writers, those who had done $10,000 to $20,000 in damage. The police unit arrests 40 to 50 wall writers each year. If a Family Court judge sentences the writer to "scrub time," the writer can end up under the supervision of a Network field rep. Scrub time varies from 50 to 100 hours, depending on how much damage the writer has done.

Dropping in on Damon and Nick

Working alongside people sentenced to scrub time are volunteers who have been befriended in the neighborhood by reps or recruited where they live. On a typical home visit, Jonathan Heard drops in on the McCandlesses on North Third Street. As the family gathers at the kitchen table, he tries to persuade Damon and Nick, 15 and 13, to volunteer. Heard talks of the brutal life on the streets: "How would you like your mother to get a phone call saying your son's down here in the morgue with a bullet in the head? 'Cause there's people out there carrying guns. The crime rate and the death rate are people your age; they ain't just blacks dying and they ain't just Hispanics–everybody's dying."

Pouting and holding an unsigned Network form–a pledge not to write on walls–Damon fidgets, while Nick bites his fingernails. "Right now it's volunteer work, but it could lead to employment," Heard goes on. Damon asks how much time he'll have to commit. "No set time," says Heard. "I could use you one week and use your brother the next week. Take your time, read it over. Call me when you finish. I'll take you to lunch. I'll treat you. I hope you eat only hot dogs. And make sure you brush your teeth 'cause I hate bad breath." Damon breaks his cool and cracks a smile; his family laughs. "And make sure you wash your feet 'cause I hate stinky feet," Heard adds. Nick points to his younger sister, Monica: "How did you know?" Heard leaves without signing the youngsters, but he says the bullet hole part of his spiel will make them seriously consider joining the Network. Besides, they might have fun.



Nicknamed the "Colossus of Ridge Avenue," 40-foot-high mural honors basketball legend Julius (Dr. J) Erving.

Tim Spencer, who grew up in the city, has headed the Anti-Graffiti Network since its inception in 1984.

Most of the youngsters start out on scrubbing crews, but there are plenty of activities to move on to. The Network enrolls them in teen clubs, arranges for them to visit museums with professional artists like Sidney Goodman and signs them up for the mural program. The Network also runs a weekly art workshop, bringing an artist to Hancock Manor, a housing complex in northwest Philadelphia, for classes. Lined up at rows of easels, youngsters painstakingly paint cartoon characters, cats and other favorite subjects, transforming the lobby of the 46-unit building into a studio. The Network also sponsors the annual Clean Sweep Games, in which several hundred urban youths—teams from around the country—run races with brooms and barrels and trash bags as they polish their cleaning skills.

In the mural program, Jane Golden tries to instill a love of art but is not searching for a Michelangelo. "Let art schools do that," she says. "This is about reality, about having kids learn about discipline, responsibility in the world, and coming out of this program with some sense of their own identity, values and self-esteem, so they can go and live a normal life and not end up dead or in jail like a lot of people that they know."

The Network apparently succeeds at helping many young people find their niche. "Out of the 10,000 former wall writers who have taken the pledge not to wall write anymore, I would say that 85 percent of them are turned around—they're either holding down full-time jobs or attending art school or college, or they're in the Armed Forces," says Tim Spencer.

Some Network youngsters have honed their art skills enough to make a little money. At last count, 28 of them had sold 37 works of art for a total of $3,910. Among them was "Zoo" muralist Alfredo Ramos, who earned $90 codesigning the cover of a D. J. Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince recording. And the Network spurred Fred Scott jr. to get a college education and start a computer maintenance company. "I had a lot of energy, but I pointed it in a negative direction," he says. "The Network helped me point that energy in a positive direction." Program veteran Nelson Wynder opened a store with a partner, where he sells T-shirts he's created; another ex-writer has opened his own barber shop. At least two dozen former graffitists have gone on to art school.

The young people in the program move on, but the murals remain, treasured assets in their neighborhoods. When a site for a mural has been agreed upon, the local residents are asked for ideas. Sometimes one of them produces a photograph, which may then serve as a model. Because of this process, many of the murals reflect the values of the neighborhoods they're in. The themes sometimes include black and Latino heritage, family values, America-the-melting-pot and we-are-the-world brotherliness. Sports figures are also popular; a recently completed mural depicts the late Hank Gathers, who was a basketball star from Philadelphia.

After the choice of a theme come the hours of effort required to make the mural a reality, which can be broken down roughly into nine steps: putting up the scaffolding, scraping, whitewashing, gridding, sketching, coloring, perfecting the painting, applying adhesive and removing the scaffolding. The more talented youths, such as former graffiti writers Haisonn Shadding and Maurice Carter, work as lead artists on the crews (Carter's crew did the mural of Hank Gathers).

It's a lot of work, but gradually the young people get into it. "They'll start to paint a little and then they're hooked," says Jane Golden, "because they're out there working, and people are coming up and saying it looks great and thank you.

"And then, maybe the press comes by and does an interview, and suddenly they're heroes, sort of—only now, they're on the right side of the law."

Three-story mural of Malcolm X, designed by Network crew, keeps a watchful eye on north Philadelphia.

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By David Roberts

His 'magpie mind' made Baring-Gould a rare bird indeed

Eccentricity was the norm in Victorian times, but the author of 'Onward, Christian Soldiers' took it to a brilliant new level

Merriol Almond

Writing in 1890, Sir James M. Barrie, the author of *Peter Pan*, ranked him as one of the eight or ten most important living novelists. The poet Algernon Charles Swinburne thought his dark saga *Mehalah* "as good as *Wuthering Heights.*" At one point there were more books listed under his name in the British Museum Library than under that of any other English writer. Queen Victoria was consoled by his poetry, Gladstone was impressed by his theological works, and journalists descended upon his West Country estate to glimpse the man at work.

How is it, then, that the world has all but forgotten Sabine Baring-Gould? During his long life, which spanned 90 summers, he wrote well over 100 books, some 30 of them novels. Yet fiction was not even his main suit. As well as a novelist, he was a pioneering archaeologist, a seminal collector of folk songs, a great traveler and travel writer, a zealous Anglican-Catholic apologist, a stupendously energetic hagiographer, a hymn writer who also composed the libretto for an opera, a flamboyant architect and restorer, an artist of no mean talent and—according to some—a mystic who dabbled in arcane wisdom. All this, amazingly, in his spare time; for the last 60 years of his life, Baring-Gould was a parson, and for 43 of those years he served double duty as the squire of a sprawling estate as well.

Poor Baring-Gould! Insofar as he is remembered at all, it is as the author of "Onward, Christian Soldiers," arguably the most popular hymn in the English language. He was astonished at the fame the verses brought him, for he always claimed he had dashed them off in ten minutes as an occasional piece for a procession of schoolchildren.

I first knew him as a travel writer, one of the quirkiest and most engaging I had ever read. Only recently did I open wide the door and start to prowl through the storeroom of his remarkable mind and life. To discover Baring-Gould is indeed like finding the key to a Victorian attic that has been locked for 70 years. Stepping inside, you behold a wild clutter of objects. Much is bric-a-brac, but much is treasure. You pick up a religious treatise here: so much musty vehemence over abstract questions no one asks anymore. But here is a book of short stories set on Dartmoor: how fresh and light and vivid, the characters speaking in the same Devonshire patois you can still hear in a Tavistock street today.

Baring-Gould was above all a splendid storyteller. The lucidity of his prose almost never fails him, and it hides a potent paradox, one that lies at the center of a mind that, as one biographer puts it, "has some claims to be considered as. . .the most unusual of his age." The paradox is the constant tension in Baring-Gould between the rational and the supernatural, the skeptic and the romantic, the Christian and (despite his calling) the pagan. All his life he was magnetically drawn to all things old and lost and mysterious, to Nordic sagas and prehistoric stones, to dark folktales and trackless wilderness, to chimeras that reason is powerless to explain.

The parish church at Lew Trenchard, Baring-Gould's family estate, stands somber watch over ancient graves.

Certain moderns have saluted Baring-Gould, emphasizing the wild and intuitive aspect of his work. John Betjeman, a former British poet laureate, wrote, "I know that I am far more indebted to him for a romantic sense of place and local legend than I am to any other writer." The novelist John Fowles maintains, "If one had to pick the strangest Victorian, Baring-Gould would surely appear on the final list of contenders."

Toward the end of his life, the rector produced two marvelous autobiographical works, *Early Reminiscences* and *Further Reminiscences.* Although he was the least confessional of writers, his memoirs are endlessly and brilliantly digressive. A recollection of a Devonshire eccen-

Man of many parts was 86 when he sat for portrait he later dismissed as "a picture of an old decrepit boat."

Photographs by Adam Woolfitt/ Susan Griggs Agency

Merriol Almond

Baring-Gould's wife, Grace, was an illiterate mill girl when they met. He had her educated by a friend.

tric named Marianne spins into a meditation on mandrake root, leading to reflections on medieval herbalists, and ending with recipes for the cure of jaundice and snakebite. There is very little trace of the sentimental in these books. The author recaptures conversations from six decades past and describes the arrangement of candles in a Swiss church he visited at the age of 10. The pair of *Reminiscences*, considered along with the astounding diversity of subjects he wrote books about—two volumes entitled *The Tragedy of the Caesars*, *The Book of Were-wolves*, a guidebook to the Riviera, a novel about the French Revolution—lend credence to the claim some have made that Baring-Gould's "magpie mind" contained a store of miscellaneous information more vast than that of any contemporary Englishman.

He was born in Exeter in 1834, heir to a line of landed gentry whose country estate, Lew Trenchard, a few miles northwest of Dartmoor in Devonshire, had been in the family since the early 17th century. All the Baring-Goulds were handsome. It was an age when gentlemen were given honorific nicknames, and Sabine had a tough act to follow: his grandfather was called the "Devonshire Adonis," his father the "Silver Poplar." Early portraits of the boy reveal a slender face, eyes fixed in a thoughtful gaze. As an adult he grew tall and upright, with a solemn mien that sometimes scared the children he sermonized to in church, who took their revenge by carving caricatures in their pew stalls that emphasized the rector's beaked nose.

His father was bored by the country life that Sabine would come to love. When the boy was only 3, the Silver Poplar uprooted the family from Devonshire, bought a coach, hired a driver and commenced a 13-year ramble all over Europe. Though the Baring-Goulds traveled in style, their mode of existence was not unlike that of senior citizens who nowadays tour America in their Winnebagos. The wandering profoundly shaped Sabine's life. By the time he went to Cambridge at 19, he spoke six languages. He knew next to nothing, however, of schoolboy society, was ignorant of games and sport, and had already become an intellectual and spiritual loner.

Baring-Gould told a revealing childhood story. The

David Roberts has a magpie mind, too, having written recently for Smithsonian *about subjects as varied as spelunking, archaeology and marble.*

family was out riding in a buggy one day when the horse, descending a steep path, stepped on a rolling stone, stumbled and fell. "Thereupon my father and mother shot like a pair of rockets over my head and the splashboard and fell into the road," he recalled. "I burst out laughing. My father was very angry with me, and my mother looked distressed. When reproached, I said: 'I could not help it, you both looked like rooks taking flight from a field where you had been feeding.'

'You bad, unprincipled boy,' said my father wrathfully, 'we might both have broken our necks.'

'Oh, then I should have cried and not laughed.'

'But, my dear,' put in my mother, 'it was so rude of you to say we were like rooks.'

'I love rooks,' I said."

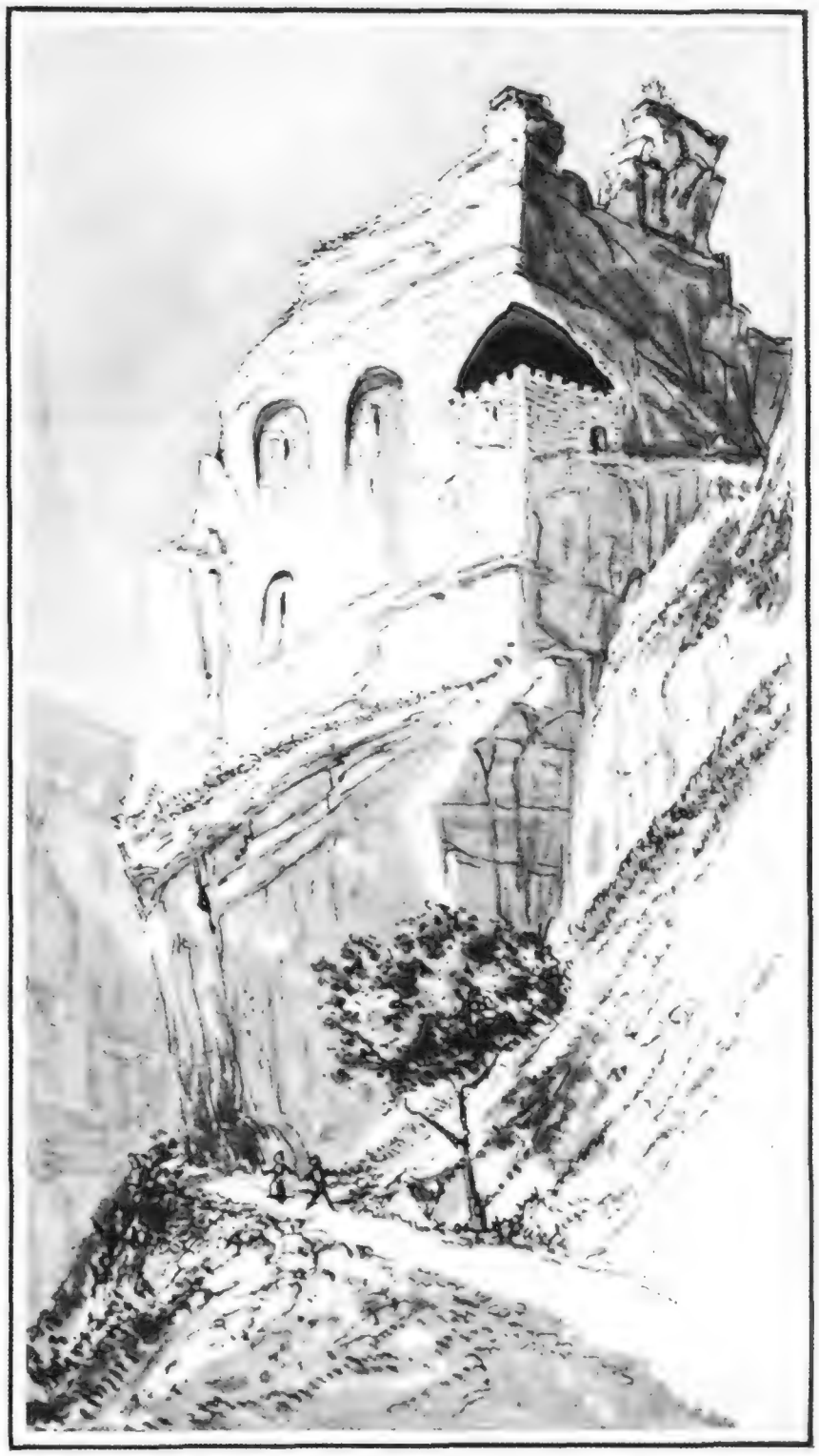
The Silver Poplar was determined that his son study mathematics and become an engineer, but Sabine would insist for the rest of his life that he had to count on his fingers and ask a maid to help him when he was doing sums. At Cambridge, where his classmates at first considered him mad, Baring-Gould immersed himself in the Catholic revival that was then in full flower in the Anglican Church. On graduating, he longed to take holy orders, but his father opposed the idea.

His students called him "Snout"

For several years after Cambridge, Baring-Gould taught school. Though his students were edified by his wide-ranging lore, it was the young schoolmaster's eccentricities that stuck in their memories. Baring-Gould sometimes lectured with a tame bat perched on his shoulder. He put an Icelandic pony that he had rescued from mine work out to graze in the schoolyard. His eyesight was already damaged from compulsive reading in bad light (or so he thought), and he owned several pairs of spectacles. (Later in life, he would absentmindedly push his spectacles up on top of his head as he preached, forget what he had done with them and seize another pair; some parishioners saw him wearing three pairs at once.) Instead of a conventional suitcase, he carried his belongings draped over his shoulders in a huge shapeless black bag that he had devised as a pony pannier in Iceland and carried ever since. "Gould's Black Slug" became infamous with the schoolboys, who gave their teacher the nickname "Snout."

At age 30, Baring-Gould fulfilled his dream of taking holy orders. He was posted to the grimy Yorkshire mill town of Horbury. Having shown no interest so far in women, the curate suddenly fell head over heels in love with a 16-year-old mill girl named Grace Taylor. Contemporaries remembered her as pretty and kind; later portraits reveal a plump, bland, serene-looking woman. Before he felt he could marry her, Baring-Gould sent Grace to live for two years with friends of his who taught her to read, schooled her in social skills and cured her Yorkshire accent. In the meantime, he paid Grace's parents the equivalent of the wages she would have earned in the mill. They were wed in 1868. The marriage lasted 48 years, during which time Grace gave birth to 15 children, all but one of whom lived to adulthood. He never evinced interest in another woman. When he buried his wife in 1916, he had carved on her tombstone "*Dimidium Animae Meae*" (Half My Soul).

By 1871, Baring-Gould was installed as the rector of East Mersea, among the marshes and mud flats of Essex. Here he spent a decade of misery: the landscape was oppressive, his parishioners benighted. He left vivid pictures of both in *Further Reminiscences* and in his best



Reproduction of sketch by Baring-Gould illustrates his book on European cliff castles and cave dwellings.

Aesop's fable of fox and crow is painted on a window of the manor house at Lew Trenchard estate (right).

A hotel now, Lew House came into Baring-Gould's family in 1626. Sabine restored it in an Elizabethan style.

novel, *Mehalah*. As he wrote in the former, "I knew the kind-hearted, impulsive Devonians, but the Essex peasants were dull, shy, reserved and suspicious. I never managed to understand them, nor they to understand me."

But Mersea and the economic pressure of his growing family drove Baring-Gould to write. It was here that he completed his most ambitious work, an opus that simply to behold fills one with weariness. Baring-Gould's six-year labor produced the 16-volume *Lives of the Saints*, containing no fewer than 3,600 biographies. Its pages are unread today.

Yet here, too, he wrote *Mehalah*, distilling all his contempt for the besotted, impious peasants to whom he ministered, and for the agues and the muck of Essex, into a doom-driven tale of will and greed triumphing over beauty and independence. The novel is named for its heroine, the best-realized female character in Baring-Gould's fiction. She is a woman whom the author loves (and makes us love), so utterly different from Grace Taylor as to make us wonder anew at the tensions held in check beneath the parson's resolute exterior. The low-born Mehalah dresses like a man, behaves like a sailor, has gypsy blood in her veins and fights to the death against the landlord who is her nemesis.

The sheer energy Baring-Gould applied to his life and writing sets an imposing standard. "No one who remembers him," claims his grandson and biographer Bickford Dickinson, "can ever recall seeing him relaxed in an easy chair." He composed standing up, upon the slanted surface of a writing desk, filling the page with crabbed, minute hieroglyphs in black ink. Although they include some of his finest work, Baring-Gould's novels were written chiefly to make money. He would write a chapter a day; if he missed a day, he wrote two chapters the next. An interviewer once asked his opinion of the latest book by Thomas Hardy. The rector confessed he had not read it; he rarely read novels, for that matter, only wrote them. When his daughters reached the age of curiosity, he forbade them to read his own novels.

In 1881, at the age of 47, Baring-Gould installed himself at Lew Trenchard, the ancestral estate. As both squire and rector, he at once set himself three tasks that in one form or another occupied the rest of his days: the spiritual rousing of his 200-odd parishioners, the restora-

Ornate plasterwork in the ballroom was done by estate masons using molds made by the local carpenter.

tion of the ancient parish church and the rebuilding of the decrepit, rat-infested manor.

Last year I spent a few days at Lew Trenchard, which has been converted into a country hotel with eight rooms. There can hardly be a more lovely and bucolic lodging place in England. The Elizabethan-style manor sits on a grassy terrace facing south across fields and woods, shaded at its back by stately oaks and copper beeches. The garden is an orderly riot of roses, foxgloves, petunias and snapdragons. When Baring-Gould moved to Lew Trenchard, a huge, raw pit—the remains of a limestone quarry his father had promoted—yawned in the slope beneath the manor. The rector diverted a stream and turned it into a sylvan lake.

So peaceful and attractive is the manor today that it takes a bit of looking to see how wildly eclectic Baring-Gould's improvements were. He ransacked Europe to furnish his home, so that you find a fountain in the form of a bronze Alsatian gooseherd before the front door, a delicately carved German mantle on the ballroom fireplace. There is a Belgian brass chandelier in the church. The house's window mullions are made of granite from his beloved Dartmoor. The room I stayed in, which was Grace's bedroom, had three leaded-glass windowpanes painted with scenes from Aesop's fable of the fox and the crow. In the foyer stands the battered old writing desk, now a repository for brochures.

Baring-Gould's characteristic absentmindedness flourished. Once while he was still teaching, he went to town to buy a joint of beef, and in his preoccupation he ordered a whole side. It took the choirboys weeks to finish it off. The rector of Lew Trenchard had little understanding of infants, and he seems at times to have lost track of the number of his own offspring. At a children's party one evening, he advanced, beaming, upon a small child descending the staircase in a party dress. "And whose little girl are you?" he thundered. The child burst into tears, sobbing, "I'm yours, Daddy."

Cecily (Image) Briggs, Baring-Gould's granddaughter, is a strong-featured, white-haired woman, tireless and articulate, who seems a reflection of the old man (although she never actually met him). We sat in the manor's oak-paneled bar one afternoon, drinking shandies while she told family stories. She said of her

Cecily (Image) Briggs, Baring-Gould's granddaughter, says the great man's many children lived in awe of him.

grandmother, "Grace absolutely hated it down here. She loved the Yorkshire moors."

"Sabine [she pronounced the name "Sabian"] was a terrible tease. Once, when his daughter Veronica was getting married, he went up to Lew Down and sent a telegram pretending to be from her fiancé: 'Have changed my mind.'" His parishioners, Image Briggs went on, loved him. "His children walked on tiptoes around him. Except with the two oldest, there was more awe than love."

Patriarch of a sprawling family, burdened by endless duties as squire and parson, and shackled to a daily stint at the writing desk—it seems the perfect recipe for a drudging and predictable life. Where in all of this was the wanderer, the romantic, the lover of lost things? Image Briggs' vignettes gave me a clue. Part of Baring-Gould's soul was always elsewhere, even as he rode his dogcart about the parish distributing plant bulbs. And he was physically absent as much as a man in his position could possibly be. He seized every week he could spare and fled to the Continent, where with one or two companions he undertook herculean walking tours, as curious as a youngster about everything he saw. Even close to home, the lure of what was vanishing always tugged at his heart. So slight a thing as the sound of mowing could move him deeply. As he wrote in 1923, recalling his youth, "Often on a June morning when I was in bed, I could hear the swish of the scythe through the dewy grass, followed presently by the musical note produced by the whetstone and the blade, as the whetstone was drawn along the latter and made it vibrate. Now the lawn-mower with its mechanical rattle has usurped their place."

One day in 1888, as he dined with friends, the subject turned to old Devonshire songs. The assembled company could sing only two in their entirety. Yet Baring-Gould remembered scores of ballads he had heard as a boy, sung in the taverns by homeless itinerant minstrels, usually illiterate, or bards retained by the inns who eked out a living entertaining the guests. The custom had all but died out. The last of the old "song-men," whose tradition stretched back to the medieval troubadours, were infirm and aged; with their passing, the cultural treasure of their songs might vanish forever.

"Come," said his host to Baring-Gould, "you are the man to undertake the job of collecting these songs and airs." Thus the rector launched himself on yet another monumental quest. Over the next three years he tracked down more than 60 song-men and three women and recorded their evanescent art. Untrained as a musician, Baring-Gould sat at a piano and plunked out each tune with one finger until the singer agreed he had it right. The fruit of this labor—which Baring-Gould later ranked as his most important achievement—was *Songs of the West*, the font of a crusade that has rescued English folksong from oblivion.

All his life Baring-Gould hiked over the upland waste of Dartmoor, then the largest remaining wilderness in southern England. By the 19th century, only the hardiest shepherds and farmers lived on the edges of the moor. Its miles of heath were covered with the ruins of tin mines dating back to the Middle Ages and with much stranger structures built of the native granite: rows of standing stones, large circles enclosing the remains of rude huts, colonies of streamside dwellings all but buried in the moss and peat, and strange barrows, or mounds, of earth.

Amateur sleuth heads out to the moors

In the 1890s, Baring-Gould determined to make a scientific investigation of those ancient ruins. He had been an amateur archaeologist since the age of 16 when, as his family wintered over in a Pyrenean village, he had gone down the lane to dig up flower roots and had unearthed the beautiful mosaic floor of a Roman villa. Now he recruited a small band of like-minded amateurs and began the first "scientific" excavations that were ever carried out on Dartmoor.

Image Briggs conjures up her grandmother Grace's exasperation at this latest passion: "He was never here at Lew Trenchard. He'd hear about a stone on the moor, and he'd be out there for a day or a week, leaving his poor wife to keep the estate."

But Dartmoor was as vital to Baring-Gould as the lives of all 3,600 of his saints. Here, in the challenge of unrav-

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Mug of good cheer awaits weary traveler next to fire at Warren House, the pub where Baring-Gould relaxed.

eling its ancient mysteries, lay the necessary counterpoise to the humdrum of parish life. Dartmoor was dangerous; Baring-Gould nearly lost his life on it one night when he sank shoulder-deep into a quaking bog. He enjoyed recounting the incident in mock-epic style, along with the close escapes of others, such as that of a man he described in one of his books. This individual was "said to have been making his way through Aune Mire when he came on a top-hat reposing, brim downwards, on the sedge. He gave it a kick, whereupon a voice called out from beneath, 'What be you a-doin' to my 'at?' The man replied, 'Be there now a chap under'n?' 'Ees, I reckon,' was the reply, 'and a hoss under me likewise.'"

When Baring-Gould's band began their excavations, the learned theories of earlier explorers announced that the ancient monuments on Dartmoor were either the remains of Druid temples, of Phoenician walled towns or of Viking fortresses. The experts agreed that the megaliths dated back not much beyond the time of Christ, and more likely to the first millennium A.D.

After years of zealous digging, chronicled only in the obscure pages of the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association*, Baring-Gould's band came to some startling conclusions. The ancient monuments were not fortresses. The people who built them were pastoralists; the circles were to keep livestock in and predators out. And, most startlingly, the builders had lived far earlier than suspected, in the Bronze Age, as long as 5,000 years ago.

With Baring-Gould's report in hand, I visited Grimspound on Dartmoor, the scene of his first dig in 1894. The rector's efforts have since been criticized by professionals. In their innocence, when they found a stone fallen, the Victorian amateurs set it back upright. Those who carry out archaeology today groan to read about such trespasses, but in the 1890s many a professional perpetrated far worse violations in the name of restoration. I could see that later researchers had taken down some of the stones Baring-Gould put back up. They had hauled away the iron railing the rector installed around the finest hut to protect it from cattle, which like to rub against the stones. But for all that, the archaeological wisdom of our day essentially confirms the findings of the Victorian pioneers. Theirs was a great deed of amateur deduction.

Dartmoor was, Baring-Gould wrote, "that region I love best in the world." In 1923, knowing of his failing health, his cronies-in-excavation sent him warm congratulations on his 89th birthday. He wrote back, complaining of the inability to stand up and write for more than a few minutes at a time. He closed, "Oh! Dartmoor! I have not set foot on it for 4 years. I look at it with yearning eyes from Lew Down, whenever I am there."

On my last afternoon at Dartmoor, I stopped at the Warren House, a public house that stands alone on a deserted road. Baring-Gould knew the place well. Often after a hard day digging on the moor, he would repair here with his colleagues. The pub figures in an eerie short story called "Snaily House" and in his Dartmoor novel *Urith*.

The pride of the place is a big stone hearth with a fire that has not been allowed to go out, day or night, summer or winter, since the pub was built in 1845. Until a few years ago, peat was the fuel; now a pair of massive beech knots smoldered in the blackened fireplace. The philosopher Heracleitus concluded that you cannot step into the same river twice, but as I sat by the hearth in Warren House I thought it permissible to wonder whether I was warming my hands by the same fire that had dried the sodden clothes of Sabine Baring-Gould a century before.

Standing stones of Stall Moor on Dartmoor's southern edge are Bronze Age, as the rector correctly deduced.

Every year, Miss Reusswig's third-graders learn how to write a proper letter. And they find it is a useful skill, what with their regular field trips into nearby Washington, D.C. (Not long ago, twenty-three thank-you notes arrived at the Ghanaian Embassy.)

As for Miss Reusswig, she's a pretty good letter writer herself. And she wrote to us. About the car we were building for her.

She wanted us to know *for whom* we were building that SL2. That blue-green one with

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Judith Reusswig is pictured with a 1993 Saturn SL2 (wheels shown are a retailer-installed item). © 1993 Saturn Corporation.

By Richard Conniff

On the lowly worm we earthlings pin our loftiest dreams

Getting rich, catching a whopper, composting our garbage, growing the perfect melon–you name it, worms can help us get it done

Bud Lee

"Grunter" Ruben Hill rubs stake with auto leaf spring to make ground vibrate and bring worms to surface.

It's a moment charged with nature's drama, akin to David Attenborough creeping up on the mountain gorillas of Rwanda. I am thrashing through the piney flatwoods of the Florida Panhandle, into the secret realm of the great shaper of the earth. Listen! *RUNT-runt, RUNT-runt, RUNT-runt.* It's a sound like a wild hog wallowing somewhere out here in the Apalachicola National Forest. Over that way!

A few steps more and, through the burned gallberry brush, I spy a man grinning and sweating. He is on his knees in front of a black stob, or stake, hammered into the ground. He takes a shiny automobile leaf spring and strokes its flat surface down rhythmically across the top of the stob: *RUNT-runt, RUNT-runt, RUNT-runt.* He pauses, listens, then varies the rhythm, catching the stob on a backstroke. The earth quakes around him. It looks like some primitive cargo-cult ritual. In fact, the man is calling earthworms. Weirder still, he is making a living calling earthworms–or as they say hereabouts, "grunting."

As he works, Ruben Hill glances around the floor of the forest, which the rangers have burned lately to knock down the undergrowth. Worms are poking their angry pink heads up through the blackened soil. They shoulder themselves out of their burrows, shimmying, dancing, twitching along on their six-inch-long bellies, driven to frenzy by this infernal vibration. Then Hill, a 37-year-old who learned worm grunting at his daddy's knee, grabs a paint can and strides around snatching up his haul, about 160 worms in five minutes. They will do their final dance on a fishhook, having been gussied up for sale by bait shops under names like "Louisiana pinks" (a cunning way to hide their true origin from potential competitors) or simply "grunt worms." Hill eyeballs several wriggling cansful. "I've made it to 2,500," he says. The early morning sun is still glinting sideways through the forest. "That's $75 right there. Not a bad payday." He'll double it by noon.

We are talking serious worms here. Could there, you ask, be a duller animal on the entire planet? Possibly not. But the lowly worm is a subject of compelling fascination (or anyway, a square meal) for a surprising array of predators, including grizzly bears, normally associated with swifter game. Worms were also a lifelong interest for no less a naturalist than Charles Darwin, who once wrote, "It may be doubted whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world. . . ."

So stop your whining, gentle reader. We earthlings pin some of our most grandiose hopes and emotions on worms. Though they are common as dirt (or maybe be-

Emerging from burrow (at right), nightcrawler pokes its tapered head around mossy forest floor, looking for food. Earthworms consume plant material and digest protozoa, bacteria and other microorganisms from soil.

cause of that), they glitter like pink gold in the eyes of rural entrepreneurs, who hawk them in hand-painted back-road signs ("Crawlers 'n' Plywood Lawn Ornaments!") all over North America. To environmentalists and government agencies, worms are the stuff of green pipe dreams: they eat garbage, turn it into precious compost and grow fat enough in the process to be ground up for livestock feed. At least, that's the theory. Worms provide peculiar sustenance even to fly fishermen, who spend inordinate amounts of time stoking their vital sense of superiority with snide references to "garden hackle."

Before Darwin, it was all much simpler: most writings about earthworms consisted of advice on how to get rid of them. Worms were the original "vermin," a word they contributed to the language (in Latin, "worm" is *vermis*). Gardeners hated them because they made the footpaths unsightly. Farmers believed worms devoured their grain and spoiled their fruit. People also disliked earthworms for less practical reasons. The definition in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is a compendium of traits the Western mind found unsavory: "A slender, creeping, naked, limbless animal, usually brown or reddish." "Worm" became a generic name for any contemptible life-form, from a tick to a tax man, including the serpent in the Garden of Eden. "O Eve," Adam lamented in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, "in evil hour thou didst give ear To that false Worm."

The worm's subterranean ability to insinuate itself anywhere, unseen, made it especially suspect. An assortment of illnesses and mental derangements were said to be caused by worms, perhaps in part because of confusion with assorted wormy parasites. A worm was a worm even when it was a toothache, a malady said to be caused by a worm at the root of the tooth.

The worst thing about worms, of course, was the gnaw-

Photographs by Dwight R. Kuhn

To make work easier, a worm usually grabs leaf by tip, not stem, but this dullard hasn't figured it out yet.

Over a period of years, accumulating worm excretions can transform barren soil into a fertile layer of loam.

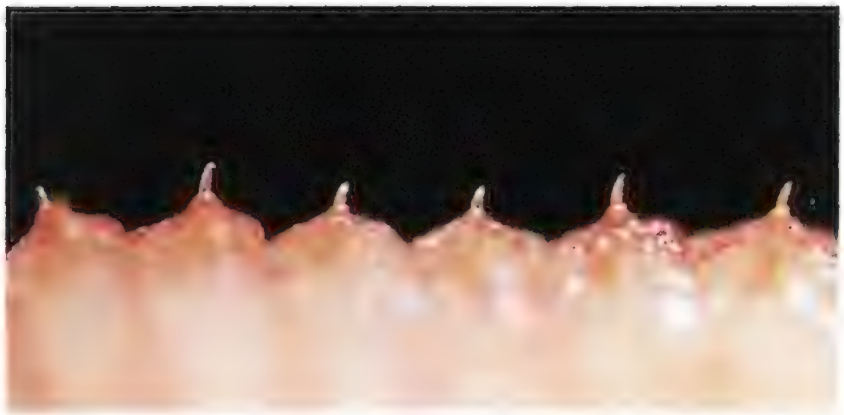
ing idea that the entire human body was doomed to become "worms' meat" (a phrase you can blame on Shakespeare). In the popular mind, earthworms would ultimately unravel each of us to the bone. Maggots and microorganisms probably deserve greater credit for this chore. But earthworm defamation lingers even now in schoolyard takeoffs on the old rhyme, "The worms they crept in, and the worms they crept out, And sported his eyes and his temples about."

Among the earliest writers to question popular antipathy toward earthworms was the 18th-century British clergyman Gilbert White in *The Natural History of Selborne.* Though worms might appear to be "a small and despicable link in the chain of Nature," he observed, they "seem to be the great promoters of vegetation, . . .by boring, perforating, and loosening the soil . . ." and by piling up vast amounts of fine manure for the very crops they were thought to destroy. There was perhaps a hint of distaste in his remark that earthworms "are hermaphrodites, and much addicted to venery," or sexual license. (A Freudian would probably find traditional attitudes toward earthworms laced with sexual subtexts. Chaucer used the idiom "naked as a worm," and in folk medicine, powdered worms were a remedy for impotence.) But White also wrote, unequivocally, "the earth without worms would soon become cold, hard-bound, . . . and sterile." It took more than a century for the world to catch up with this idea.

Charles Darwin's last book, *The Formation of Vegetable Mould,* published in 1881, was the first methodical study of earthworms. "We refer to it as the peak, the *culmination,* of his professional activities," a modern worm scholar enthuses. This may be a matter of perspective. But Darwin's worm book was surprisingly popular; he found himself besieged by correspondence from backyard philosophizers of the worm. He also heard from critics who doubted–as they had doubted his work on evolution–that small causes could produce the vast effects Darwin attributed to worms.

How worms recycle the earth

Darwin came to recognize that worms are incredibly numerous, citing one estimate (modest, in retrospect) that 53,767 worms per acre foraged through an ordinary garden. He also demonstrated that worms transform the earth by eating their way, over and over, through the entire upper soil layer. A worm can consume about 30 percent of its own weight daily in plant matter, minute animals and dirt, much of which gets excreted on the surface in the familiar, coiling heaps known as worm casts. From the casts at one site, Darwin calculated that earthworms brought 18 tons of soil to the surface per acre each year. That number falls well within modern estimates. In the Nile delta, an extreme case, earthworms



Bristles on skin help in locomotion and, when extended, allow worms to resist being pulled out of the ground.

Efficient tube-within-a-tube body cavity is composed of a muscular outer wall and an intestinal inner wall.

A crawler is stretched thin as it expands posterior segments and extends bristles that grip burrow walls.

annually deposit *1,000 tons* of casts per acre–a weight equivalent to 500 junked cars but considerably more useful to farmers.

Hence the big question: Where does all this worm poop go? Darwin figured that, in his samples, it accumulated on the surface in a barely noticeable layer a fraction of an inch thick each year. But over three decades he watched a flinty patch his sons called the "stony field" become loamy enough to gallop across on horseback. Darwin was also the first to note the debt that archaeology owes to earthworms: the casts they heap up bury and preserve even the most massive objects, which the worms may simultaneously undermine with their burrowing. He attributed the sinking effect of the monoliths at Stonehenge, for instance, to worms.

Above all (or perhaps below), Darwin won popular acceptance for Gilbert White's idea that worms make the ground suitable for plants. They aerate and drain the soil with their burrows, drag down leaf fragments to grind up for food and "mingle the whole intimately together, like a gardener who prepares fine soil for his choicest plants." Long before the advent of the plow or of the human race itself, Darwin wrote, "the land was in fact regularly ploughed" by earthworms.

Researchers now estimate that there are more than 4,000 earthworm species plowing their way across the face of the planet. According to Sam James, a prominent worm taxonomist, the list grows by a dozen or so new species each year. They may vary widely in habit: some live in rain forest treetops and dine on decomposing material trapped in bromeliads perched at dizzying heights. Some may burrow eight feet underground. Some dine on other earthworms. An Australian species, the Giant Gippsland earthworm, can grow more than 40 inches long, and a South African worm puts up such large casts that farmers must use bulldozers to level their fields.

For most of us, though, worms are still worms. All species conform to the same efficient, if uninspiring, body plan: a tube within a tube. Aristotle described worms aptly as the "intestines of the earth," all guts, no glory.

Frequent contributor Richard Conniff wrote Ocean Drifters, *a TV documentary about life in the Gulf Stream. It airs on TBS at 9 P.M. EST, August 22.*

Mating worms, equipped with male and female organs, exchange sperm for external fertilization of eggs. Reddish-band secretions form cocoon.

Young emerge from lemon-shaped cocoon within two to three weeks.

The best-known worms, nightcrawlers, are not native to this continent; they arrived here in the soil of the potted plants that early European settlers brought with them. A crawler feeds by poking its head aboveground at night and reaching all around its burrow to grab leaves with its toothless, padlike mouthparts. It can be a picky eater. Maple leaves apparently taste better than oak leaves, for example, and may disappear faster.

Darwin spent enormous energy demonstrating that worms think their way around a leaf almost as if it were a geometric problem, usually seizing the narrowest point to reduce resistance as they drag it down into the burrow. Subsequent researchers have suggested that worms can also learn their way around a simple maze. The rest of the world, however, has not rushed to embrace Darwin's argument that the spark of active intelligence exists even in a worm. (In 1881, *Punch*, the humor magazine, took Darwin's whole theory as an affront. Mixing earthworms and evolution, one of its cartoons traced the ancestry of a British gentleman back to literal vermin. "Man is but a worm," the caption lamented.)

Whatever the worm eats, bits of sand or rock in the gizzard are rolled around by the powerful muscles of the digestive tract to work like millstones in breaking down the meal. The nightcrawler keeps its hind end tucked securely in its burrow while it feeds, for rapid retreat. If a robin grabs the worm, it can expand its lower segments to wedge itself in the burrow. The worm's skin is also lined with retractable bristles, or setae, normally used for locomotion, and it can drive these into the walls of the burrow as an anchor. A worm may snap in two before its antagonist can yank it out. Contrary to folklore, however, both halves don't regenerate; a worm can replace a limited number of front or hind segments, but only if it's still got a middle.

Animals fare better than humans at turning the worm to profit. Foxes, for instance, learn to hunt worms in the leeward side of copses, out of the wind, especially on rainy nights. They crisscross a good area methodically, ears up, alert for the telltale sound of bristling setae scraping the soil. Then, writes mammalogist David Macdonald, a fox "plunges its snout into the grass, grabs the worm with its incisors and swiftly raises its head." Macdonald watched foxes snap up as many as ten worms a minute and reported that in some seasons worms may be a fox's main food. At times worms may also be important for grizzly bears, which, in wet weather, key in on areas where worms gather. Badgers, moles, water shrews and certain carnivorous slugs prey primarily on worms.

No one knows why phenomena like rain and vibration bring out worms. One intriguing theory about worm predation is that gulls may actually paddle the ground with their feet–and so may certain turtles–to bring them to the surface. A researcher in central Pennsylvania observed the improbable sight of a wood turtle stomping its front feet and banging its plastron down on a moist stream bank, then moseying around to gather up the outraged worms. Perhaps the same effect, magnified to the scale of a Boeing 747, played a role in the earthworm's one shining moment of extraterrestrial glory: earthworms were implicated as an aviation hazard at New Zealand's Christchurch Airport because they were keeping so many gulls fat and happy along the runways, where the gulls tended to become turbine fodder.

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Steven R. Nickerson

Mary Appelhof holds a basin of the "vermicompost" her earthworms manufactured from household garbage.

To satisfy our own inexplicably widespread and remorseless urge to get worms out of the ground, we humans will resort to vibration, electrocution, inundation, chemical attack or almost any other remotely plausible method. A school in the English town of Nantwich actually sponsors an annual competition in worm charming, limiting entrants to some of the more sporting techniques. On a Saturday afternoon in June, they assault their three-square-meter patches of the Sceptered Isle with drum, clarinet, seesaw, a tap-dancing pony or almost any other device. In 1980 one contestant set the world worm-charming record of 511 worms in 30 minutes by the conventional method of jabbing a pitchfork into the ground and twanging it. The winner gets a golden worm rampant.

In North America we tend to be more earnest about our earthworms, possibly to our own detriment. Many people use electric probes to jolt fish bait to the surface. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission has reported at least 28 deaths involving homemade worm-probe devices. In the Apalachicola National Forest, investigators suspect that worm grunters sometimes start their own forest fires in order to open up new territory. One such fire burned 7,000 acres after Memorial Day weekend in 1992, when the price of worms leapt to an all-time high. Forest rangers say fighting that conflagration cost them about $400,000.

But the Canadian worm business makes Florida's grunters look like hayseeds. Worm gatherers in Ontario sometimes pay thousands of dollars for seasonal harvesting rights to orchards and golf courses, and they export a billion worms a year to the U.S. bait market. Pickers work at night, stooped over, with an open tin can strapped to each ankle and a miner's light for spotting their quarry. Since the worms come to the surface to feed anyway, without artificial inducement, a good picker can gather 10,000 worms in a night. Bait traders assemble for breakfast at a restaurant in west Toronto to bid in a kind of crawler commodity exchange.

Superworm can do anything

The tolerant reader who has stayed with me this far may begin to sense that the earthworm isn't merely nature's drudge, but can also sometimes slip out the side door into the blue surreal. (Did I mention that Darwin played the piano to his worms when he was trying to sort out the effects of sound versus vibration?) With earthworms, you begin to imagine that *anything* is possible. This may partly explain why so many people end up putting their last, best hopes into the strange proposition that whatever the question, worms are the answer.

In something like this optimistic spirit, I phoned one of those "healthy planet" mail order companies not long ago and ordered my own personal worm bin. The catalog showed a Martha Stewart type dropping a spotless banana skin into a plastic box. Worms "in a closet or under a table" would eat her (and my) family's kitchen waste "without any mess or bad odors" and turn it into rich potting soil. "And don't worry. . .the worms can't escape!" I read that part aloud to my wife. No slimy stampedes to spoil the big dinner party. Bring on the vermicelli!

The small-is-beautiful dream of becoming a worm wrangler and master of compost first gained currency in the 1970s, and it's one of those neglected lifestyle choices that seems to come back and haunt certain people in midcareer. In those days, researchers had produced promising evidence that worms could ease the problems of municipal-garbage and sewage-sludge disposal. They could turn manure from intensive pig and poultry operations into salable compost–and then the farmer could harvest the worms themselves for their protein. Several studies showed that chickens gained weight faster on earthworm meal than on a normal diet. Researchers in the Philippines found that homegrown earthworms were a good alternative to imported feeds for rearing quail and tilapia. A Canadian provincial government looked into schemes to raise worms for dog food, among other products.

The current, persistent rumor that worms are a secret

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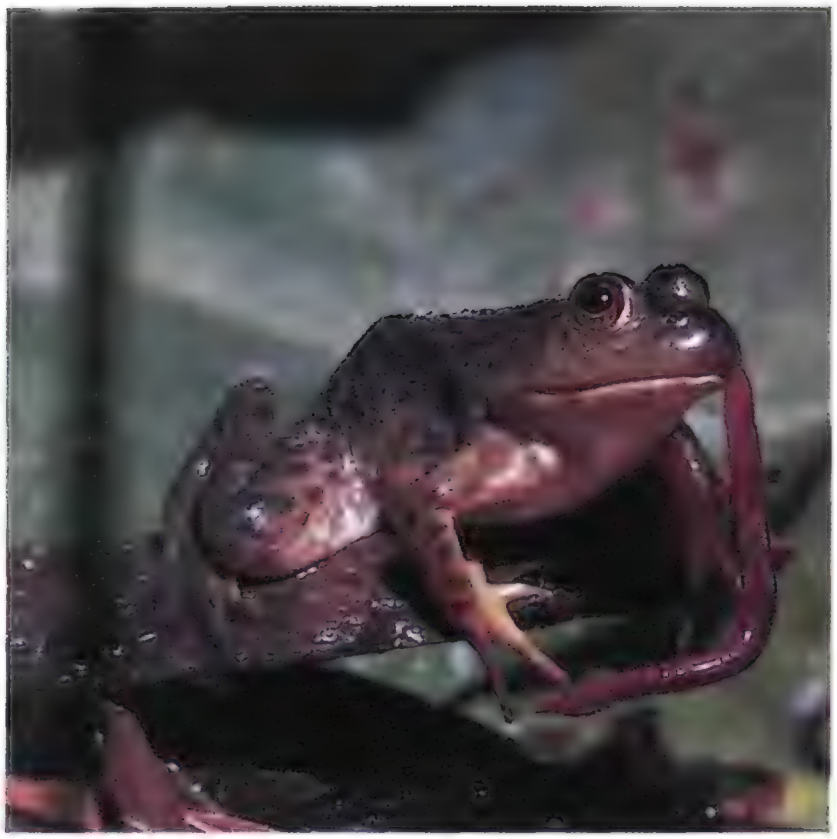

Bullfrog looks understandably pleased as it swallows a worm that would be better off if it had stayed home.

ingredient of fast-food hamburgers may derive from these earlier efforts. Earthworms have, in fact, served as human food for the Maori of New Zealand and have been served in a Japanese pie. Though worms are as much as 90 percent water, their dry weight is comparable in protein content to almost any other meat. The trouble with the fast-food rumor–and with almost all worm-ranching schemes–is that it would be cheaper to buy tenderloin.

Alan Tomlin, a researcher with Agriculture Canada, keeps a file on failed attempts at the earthworm game. Promoters often advertise in areas experiencing hard times, he says, where desperation helps give the pitch a tantalizing, perpetual-motion appeal. Buyers may pay $4,000 to $7,000 for a franchise, which gets them worms, several dozen plastic buckets, a "secret technology" manual and the "exclusive" right to sell worm franchises to other suckers. Then they find that growing worms is costly, time-consuming work, with no profitable market for the product. Tomlin estimates that rearing worms can cost a small operator $30 a pound.

My own worm bin, purchased not for pocket money but for the greater good of the planet, arrived when I was on an out-of-town business trip. By telephone, I explained to my wife, Karen, how to tear up old newspapers for bedding and make a gloppy knot of 1,000 compost worms feel generally at home in our kitchen. And what a happy talk we had!

It slipped out that this worm scheme had already cost $92. I explained that if we removed *just five pounds* of garbage a week from the waste stream, the town would save enough in dumping fees to justify the cost of the worm bin in no more than–what?–13.6 years. Karen pointed out that $92 was the price of dinner for two at a fine restaurant–an extra cost I was going to have to factor in to the equation at the earliest possible date.

When I wandered home two weeks later, the worms were churning their way through a sea of newsprint and grapefruit rinds. I peeled back a layer of garbage, and they reared their ugly little heads and went wriggling for cover. "Could there be more of them in there than when we started?" Karen demanded. I noted learnedly that worms are indeed hermaphrodites, equipped with both male and female organs. When they mate, they exchange sperm for external fertilization of the eggs in a kind of mucosal ring around the swollen part of the torso. Some also reproduce asexually by parthenogenesis. Karen gave me a look suggesting that what two (or fewer) consenting adult worms do in the privacy of their own bin is their business. So I cut to the bottom line: in one study, 8 compost worms multiplied to 1,500 individuals in six months. "Oh God! What are we going to do?" she said, with a lovely tremolo bordering on a suppressed sob. "Sell them for fun and profit?" I didn't tell her that compost worms make lousy fish bait or that I was having certain squeamish thoughts about becoming a fly fisherman.

A few weeks later, the kitchen started to smell like a compost heap. Then we had a breakout (a "worm crawl," in the jargon), and though the dog happily lapped up the escapees, Karen summarily banished the whole enterprise to the root cellar.

A worm's work is never done

But none of this is intended to discourage proponents of the earthworm (unless, that is, they are thinking of dropping $7,000 on a major career change). Worms can indeed accomplish miracles. Dutch researchers are using them to help reclaim freshly drained lowlands, and worms seem to serve as a natural plow in the promising field of no-till agriculture. Worms don't merely plow the earth, as Darwin observed a century ago; they may also produce plant-growth hormones; and, as studies have shown, active worm populations dramatically boost plant productivity.

Even as a solution to the solid-waste problem, worms may yet prove to be more than a pipe dream. North of San Diego, the Fallbrook Sanitary District until recently ran this country's most successful large-scale worm composting scheme to date. Serving 17,000 people, the district produced ten tons of wet sludge daily. A regimen of regular composting for 30 days, followed by 60 days' treatment by compost worms turned the sludge into a premium garden product. Local nurseries found that they could sell "Fallbrook Vermigro" for about $5 a bag. The program was actually showing a profit, counting the avoided cost of trucking sludge to a landfill. Then neighboring homeowners decided that all composting smells.

After a bitter fight, the uncomposted sludge is now being trucked a hundred miles out to the desert, and the worms have been sold.

The city of Seattle has taken an alternative approach to vermicomposting. Their program was inspired by the nation's reigning worm guru, Mary Appelhof (p. 92), a designer of worm bins and the author of *Worms Eat My Garbage* and its ambitious sequel, *Worms Eat Our Garbage.* Appelhof is a delightful, easygoing Michigan resident who sometimes wears a "Worm Woman" hard hat. Seattle is encouraging residents to build their own worm bins, which can be camouflaged as patio benches.

"I've been working with earthworms for 20 years," says Appelhof. "I used to dream eventually we would get tons of worms eating tons of garbage. But I didn't have the means to make that happen. Now Seattle has 6,000 worm bins, and say each is handling 5 pounds of waste a week, which is 15 tons, which is 780 tons a year. So tons of worms *are* out there eating tons of garbage. It's happening. I just didn't know it was going to happen on the individual scale."

It is a highly likable dream, with a one-step-at-a-time logic, aptly suited to Darwin's idea that small causes yield great effects. It certainly makes more sense than trucking tons of solid waste out to vanishing landfills.

But as Darwin also discovered, the closer you look at earthworms, the more complicated they get. Add people to the equation and you have to wonder how well worm bins will go down with the average self-indulgent American—such as myself. Just now, I am sitting in the root cellar flipping through Appelhof's first book. My worm bin is humming along nicely. But I see that sooner or later I'm going to have to separate several thousand worms from the rich compost they're producing and start over. Appelhof suggests several methods. The one that catches my eye involves three hours of "therapeutic" hand-sorting. It's due about two or three months after start-up.

I haven't told Karen yet, but the way I figure it, that'll be just about the time for my next big trip out of town.

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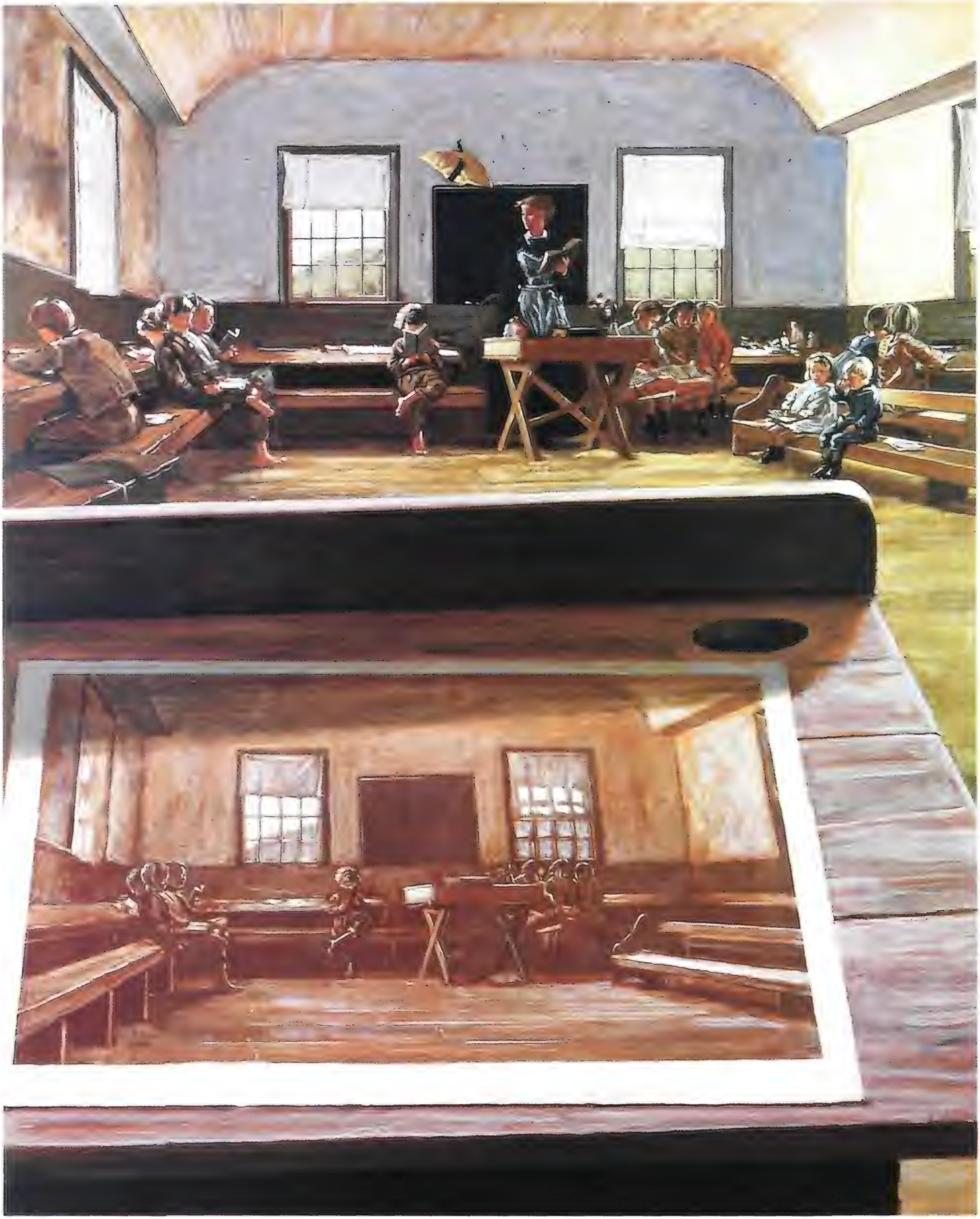

An artist's new take on the old schools of art

George Deem learned from the masters by stepping into their shoes; the result is a witty series that pays homage to them

In his Manhattan loft, Deem starts another painting; those in the background show other facets of his work.

One day in 1984, artist George Deem left his loft apartment in New York City, walked up Seventh Avenue to Penn Station and hopped the train to Washington, D.C. High on his list was a stop at the National Gallery of Art to see *Young Girl with a Flute*, a painting by Vermeer, whose works he had been studying and using as a point of departure for the previous 12 years. Deem's encounter with that painting was to change the course of his art in a most unexpected way.

Or, more properly, it was his encounter with the label next to the work. "There was no doubt in my mind that this was a Vermeer," he says today, "but when I looked at the label, it didn't say 'Vermeer,' it said 'School of Vermeer.'" Deem understood the meaning of the label; no newcomer to the art world, he'd begun painting while still a youth in Indiana, then had attended the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and worked for a while in Italy. But as he stood there, the label, in that funny way that can sometimes happen, hit a raw nerve.

Riding home on the train, Deem played with the question, "What would the School of Vermeer look like?" He had actually explored the theme of "school" once before in his art: five years earlier he'd seen a photograph in a magazine of a "typical American classroom" and, struck by its similarity to his own junior high classroom–including the same wooden lift-top desks lined up in perfect rows and the same unfinished portrait of George Washington above the blackboard–he'd made a painting of it. "I wanted to depict the image in my own hand as a way to get closer to it," he says. "My teacher in that classroom, Sister Bertilla, was the person who taught me to paint."

Before the train pulled into Penn Station, Deem knew what he wanted to do. "I decided to mix the two elements, my kind of schoolroom and the 17th-century Dutch environment, into a new composition," he says. Working in the style of Vermeer, he borrowed ingredients from that artist's paintings, such as a tile floor, and in place of the George Washington portrait he put Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*. The process so engrossed him that he ended up doing 40 "School of . . ." paintings in all, each requiring him to master the style and technique of a new artist. Broadly speaking, this approach places Deem among those artists, of which there are many right now, who make art about art.

Recently an exhibition entitled "The School of . . ." was organized in Indiana by the Evansville Museum of Arts and Science, where it will be on view through July 11. It will then travel to the University of Florida in Gainesville; the Mitchell Museum in Mt. Vernon, Illinois; the Polk Museum of Art in Lakeland, Florida; the Indiana State Museum in Indianapolis; and the Wichita Center for the Arts in Kansas.

Now for the pop quiz. On the following two pages, several of George Deem's "School of . . ." paintings have been reproduced. We have provided a few clues and invite you to identify the school represented in each work.

Constance Bond

In *School of Winslow Homer*, Deem combined elements from Homer's paintings with the desk of his own youth.

How's your art historian's eye?

Each painting is George Deem's answer to the question "What would the school of this artist look like?" How many of them can you identify? *Answers on page 116.*

A Ballet dancers and a racetrack near Paris were favorite subjects of this artist.

B Madame X meets the daughters of Edward D. Boit in the atelier of the American painter.

C This 18th-century French artist was called "a mere room decorator" by critic John Ruskin.

D Book on the desk in the foreground is a dead giveaway, as is the duo sitting at teacher's desk.

E This Dutch artist's interior scenes often include quiet figures, tile floors.

F The satin-and-lace dresses of Spain's supreme painter were George Deem's toughest challenge.

By Tom Alexander

'Ambitious little romancer'—or visionary genius?

History is still confused about Homer Lea, a mysterious American who fought in China in 1900 and predicted future global wars

For many decades before the Communists took over, China's revolutionary turmoil exerted an irresistible fascination on an assortment of American adventurers, soldiers, opportunists and roughnecks. Of all that motley crew, the oddest was a sickly, 88-pound hunchback with bad eyesight, an obsession with military glory and more than a touch of genius. His name was Homer Lea, and by age 23 he was a general in a Chinese army. By age 34 he was chief military adviser to the leader of the rebellion that overthrew a Chinese dynasty.

In the spring of 1969, a collection of dignitaries, including the U.S. Ambassador to Taiwan and the Premier of the Republic of China, gathered reverently at a memorial service in Taipei to deposit the ashes of Lea, who had died in a seaside cottage in Santa Monica, California, 57 years before. Taiwanese participants vowed that Lea's remains would one day be transferred to the mausoleum of China's revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen on the Communist Chinese mainland. Sun Yat-sen, often regarded as China's equivalent of George Washington, was Homer Lea's coconspirator. He regarded Lea as one of the great military geniuses of the age.

The Chinese were not alone in admiring Lea. Lenin, no political slouch himself, said that Lea knew "more about world politics than all the cabinet ministers now in office" and had "the most exact knowledge of military affairs of anyone next to Clausewitz."

Lea is best known for two astonishing books, written in 1909 and 1912, in which he predicted the global warfare that came only after his death. He accurately spelled out the major combatants, general strategies and even specific incidents, such as Nazi Germany's 1940 occupation of the Netherlands, and Japan's attack on Hawaii and conquest of the Philippines. At the time of his death in 1912, Lea was working on a third book that predicted yet another world war. That war, he said, would involve England and the United States on one side, and the Soviet Union on the other. Among the precipitating events of this war, Lea predicted, would be a Russian invasion of Afghanistan and Iran.

Lea's books were once required reading in the military schools of Japan and Germany, and best-sellers in both countries. Statesmen and military experts sought out the self-styled consulting strategist's advice on how to prepare for the global conflicts he foresaw. Nowadays, though, American historians who have heard of Lea tend to dismiss him as a vainglorious fraud, whose flaws of character tarnished the generous causes to which he devoted his short life.

He was born in Denver in 1876. According to some accounts his impairments stemmed from a fall as an infant, but other sources attribute them to a congenital ailment that left him with recurring bouts of blindness, constant pain and a cruel spinal curvature that made him look virtually neckless. The third child of Hersa and Alfred Lea, who earned a comfortable income from local mining properties, Homer reached his ultimate height of five feet by age 12. His playmates called him "Little Scrunch-neck," but they accepted him as he doggedly held up his end on camping expeditions and in the general rough-and-tumble of a Western childhood.

Taking his lead from Napoleon

Lea was consumed by a single overwhelming, seemingly hopeless, lifelong passion: the desire to become a general in command of fighting troops. "All great careers are carved out by the sword," he declared to a college friend. The key to Lea's personality was surely his impassioned identification with Napoleon. Late in life, while visiting the site of one of his idol's battles, Lea would write "I . . . rejoice with him as each apparently insurmountable barrier falls."

The family moved to Los Angeles in 1893, and a few years later Lea enrolled at Stanford University, where his mannerisms, obsessions and sheer brilliance amused and intrigued classmates. He made lifelong friends at Stanford—influential academics, and several journalists who later abetted his bizarre enterprises and seldom neglected any opportunity to pump up the Lea legend with

At height of China period, Lea sat for a ramrod-stiff portrait, with a huge sword and fine Mandarin robe.

In 1898 young emperor Kuang-hsu tried reforms in China, but he was ousted by dowager empress Tz'u-hsi.

dubious material. One of them, newsman Will Irwin, described Lea as "pathetically hunchbacked" but noted that he carried himself with a defiant dignity, repelling most advances toward intimacy that might be prompted by pity.

According to Irwin, Lea had a reputation as Stanford's coolest poker and chess player. He had also become a proficient fencer, aided, it was said, by his aggressive energy and unusually long arms. During the militaristic fervor that swept the country at the outbreak of the Spanish-American War in 1898, Lea was turned down by the Regular Army but managed to join a local National Guard cavalry troop.

He tried for West Point, thinking it might waive the physical requirements in his case. Rebuffed, he began teaching himself strategy and tactics by studying famous campaigns. His college room was papered with maps on which he plotted the globe-spanning wars he had already begun to conceive.

Homer Lea liked to insist that out of the past 3,400 years, only 234 were peaceful. "To speak of the end of all wars," he would proclaim in a rich, low voice, "is like speaking of the end of all earthquakes." It followed that war, not peace, was the human norm. Such cynicism galled Stanford president David Starr Jordan, a dedicated pacifist who lectured students about the glorious 20th century that was then about to dawn, in which the ancient impetus to war would be damped by global commerce: "There is not a conceivable enemy unless we create it, not a nation that would fight us if it could."

The fiery little Lea would jump up in the midst of such a lecture, challenging Jordan's claims, but the two were on friendly personal terms. Jordan commended Lea as "a youth of extraordinary parts—ready memory, very vivid imagination, imperturbable coolness." In public, however, the brash young Machiavellian and the avuncular idealist played out the ancient dispute about how best to think about the world: as it is or as it ought to be. On occasion, the exasperated Jordan would describe Lea as excessively warlike, a "vulgar loudmouth" and an "ambitious little romancer trying to make the most of his short life, limited physique and boundless imagination."

With a military career denied him at home, Lea, along with many ex-soldiers of his day, saw opportunities in China. As a child, he had struck up a friendship with Ng Poon Chew, a Chinese Presbyterian pastor and member of the Chinese Empire Reform Association, a branch of the Protect the Emperor Society. That group sought the return to power of China's former ruler, the young emperor Kuang-hsu, who had tried to introduce Western notions of constitutional monarchy into the world of dynastic privilege. The project infuriated the emperor's Manchu kinsmen, who had ruled China for many centuries. They deposed the young reformer and installed his aunt, the dowager empress Tz'u-hsi. She imprisoned her nephew and executed many of his fellow reformers, driving others abroad, where they plotted the emperor's return and sought support from thousands of overseas Chinese.

Through Ng Poon Chew, Lea acquired a working knowledge of Chinese and introductions to a powerful secret organization, the Chinese Freemasons. He dropped out of Stanford in 1899, his junior year, because of eye trouble, and after suffering a bout of smallpox while recuperating, never returned. In the meantime, he had somehow persuaded the Protect the Emperor Society of his military gifts. One newspaper friend said the Chinese were impressed by Lea's false claim to being a grandson of Robert E. Lee. Another said that many 19th-century Chinese regarded hunchbacks as lucky and a recovery from smallpox as an auspicious sign of godly favor. It seems astonishing, but the Los Angeles branch of the society assigned him to China as a "secret military agent" to convey funds and raise and train revolutionary troops.

By that time, in addition to a budding revolution, the Boxer Rebellion, an anti-Western uprising, was under way in China. The young Napoleon-worshiper saw his chance. "Whenever there is fighting," he said later, "there are opportunities for leadership."

The April 22, 1900, edition of the *San Francisco Call* carried these headlines: "YOUNG CALIFORNIAN IS PLOT-

Once in power, Tz'u-hsi crushed all reform and put a price on Lea's head when he began plotting against her.

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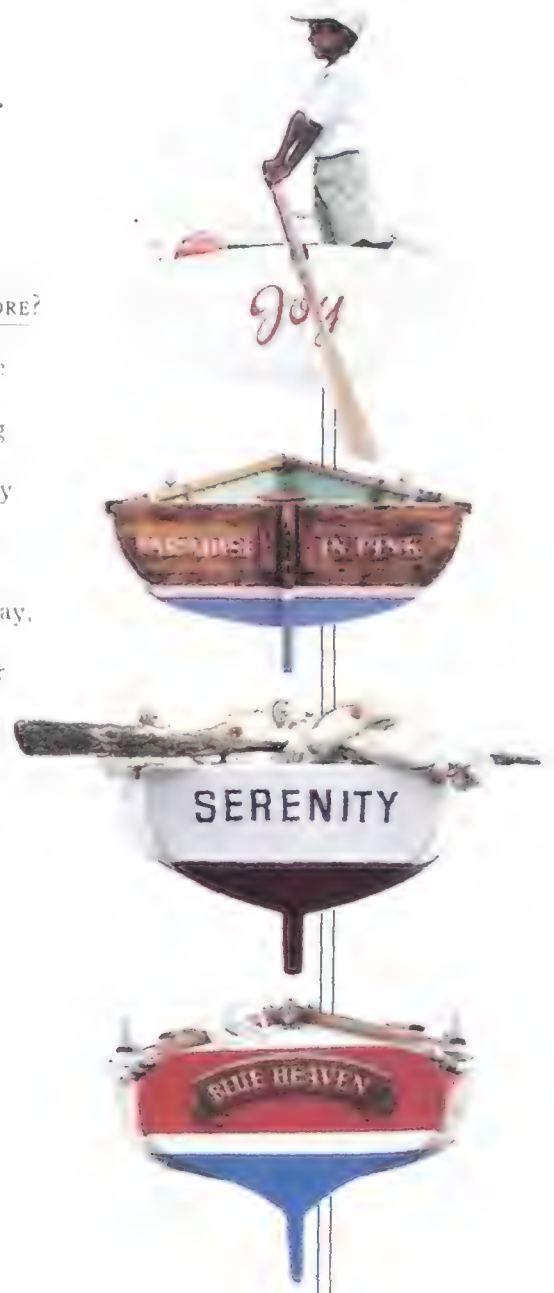

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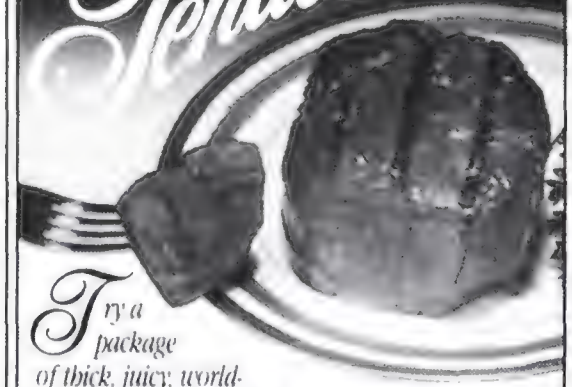

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In the "exposé" that followed, the paper revealed that Homer Lea, "a young man of more or less leisure who comes to town on a Friday night and makes pleasant headquarters at one of our swell hotels," was about to sail for China to become head of a revolutionary army that would include a sprinkling of other American volunteers. He proposed to topple the Manchu empress and install her nephew. From the wealth of details and several posed photographs of Lea, it is clear that most of the paper's information about this "secret" mission could have been supplied only by Lea himself.

The same paper also carried a facsimile letter from the Chinese Consul General thanking the paper for exposing this plot against his government and saying the government would take measures to frustrate this American who was "grasping for riches stained with the blood of misguided rebels."

Many of the most astonishing—and dubious—items in the Lea legend date from that first trip to China. What really happened may never be known. In later years, Lea's house was broken into several times, presumably by individuals seeking to discover—or conceal—the identities of Lea's contacts and coconspirators. To discourage such intruders, Lea's widow had most of his records destroyed. What's left is a maze of contradictory accounts and exotic anecdotes—from friends, enemies, sensationalist journalists, conspirators and Lea himself. Some were trying to embellish the truth; some simply wanted to obscure it. According to a story that Lea told a friend, reporter Harry Carr—greatly embroidered on by Claire Boothe Luce in a 1942 article in the *Saturday Evening Post*—Lea arrived in China in 1900. He was taken to a clan-

The author, former editor at Fortune *magazine, wrote about his adventures in blacksmithing in the May issue.*

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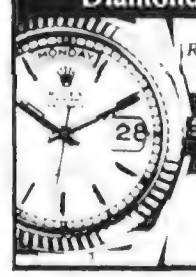

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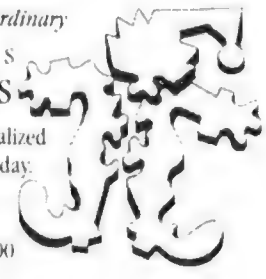

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Lea ally Sun Yat-sen (with his son) sought an end to the Manchu dynasty and a reform government for China.

destine meeting with scholarly intellectual K'ang Yu-wei, the prime minister and head of the movement to return the emperor to power.

"Why have you come?" K'ang reportedly asked.

"I have come to help you save China from the Old Tigress," said Lea. "To rescue Kuang-hsu. To lead your armies to victory."

"You are too young to do all that."

"I am the same age as Napoleon at Rivoli."

The prime minister chuckled but commissioned him as a lieutenant general in the emperor's army and gave him command of a division of volunteers. Luce's fantastic version eventually places Lea and his troops in Peking during the Boxer Rebellion, in hot pursuit of the fleeing empress. Surprised by a rear attack, his campaign failed.

Lea's stepson, Joshua Powers, tells a quite different tale. According to him, Lea learned the empress had fled Peking in advance of the international

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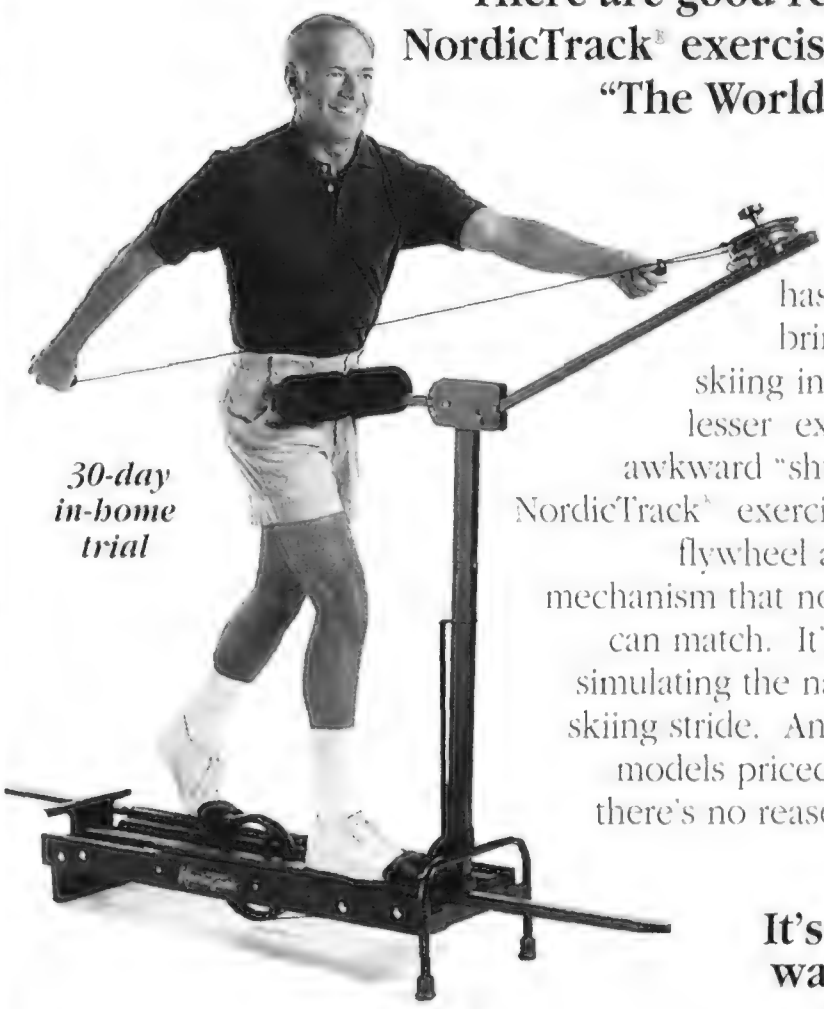

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armies bent on suppressing the Boxers–and taken the deposed emperor with her. He then conceived the idea of marching his forces to join with another army hoping to capture the empress and free the young emperor.

Only a hundred miles from his destination, however, he learned that the army he was to meet had already been defeated and its leaders executed. In any case, legend holds that Lea, with a $10,000 price on his head, had to escape through the hostile countryside disguised as a French missionary. In later years Lea liked to embellish the story at banquets with his Chinese friends. He would say he had been wounded in the arm and had taken refuge in a Buddhist temple. There, an old monk dressed his wound and offered him food and drink. As Lea reached out for a cup, so the story went, the monk took his hand and said, "It is a small hand. But it is a great hand. You will lead armies and vanquish your enemies." And as he spoke, a little bird dropped off a tree outside the temple door–a sign in China that a great throne will fall.

At some point during the trip, Lea made his way to Japan and, apparently, met Sun Yat-sen. Trained in Hong Kong as a medical doctor, Sun had already become one of the world's most celebrated revolutionaries. More than simply wanting to replace one Chinese monarch with another, Sun planned to install republican government in China. In his reminiscences he describes how a pale little man approached him and offered to throw in his lot with him. Sun thanked the man perfunctorily but later asked a friend who the man was.

"'Oh, that,' came the reply, 'is Colonel Homer Lea, . . . perhaps the most brilliant military genius now alive.'"

Next morning, Sun called on Lea and told him that if the revolution in China were successful, he would appoint Lea his chief military adviser.

Lea returned to California in April 1901, dressed, to the vast amusement of his old friends, in a general's uni-

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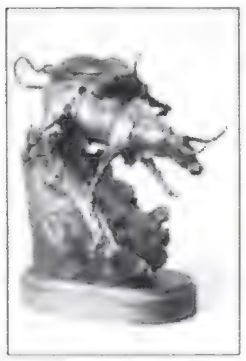

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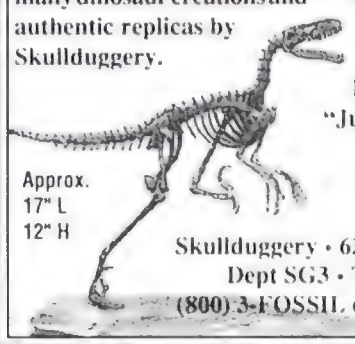

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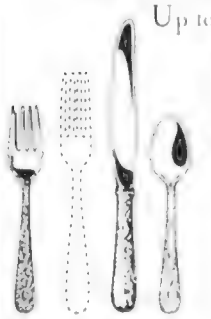

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form he had designed himself, complete with brass buttons embossed with dragons. Acquaintances ceased scoffing when a succession of high-ranking Chinese, including K'ang Yu-wei, the popular reform leader, began arriving at Lea's Santa Monica house.

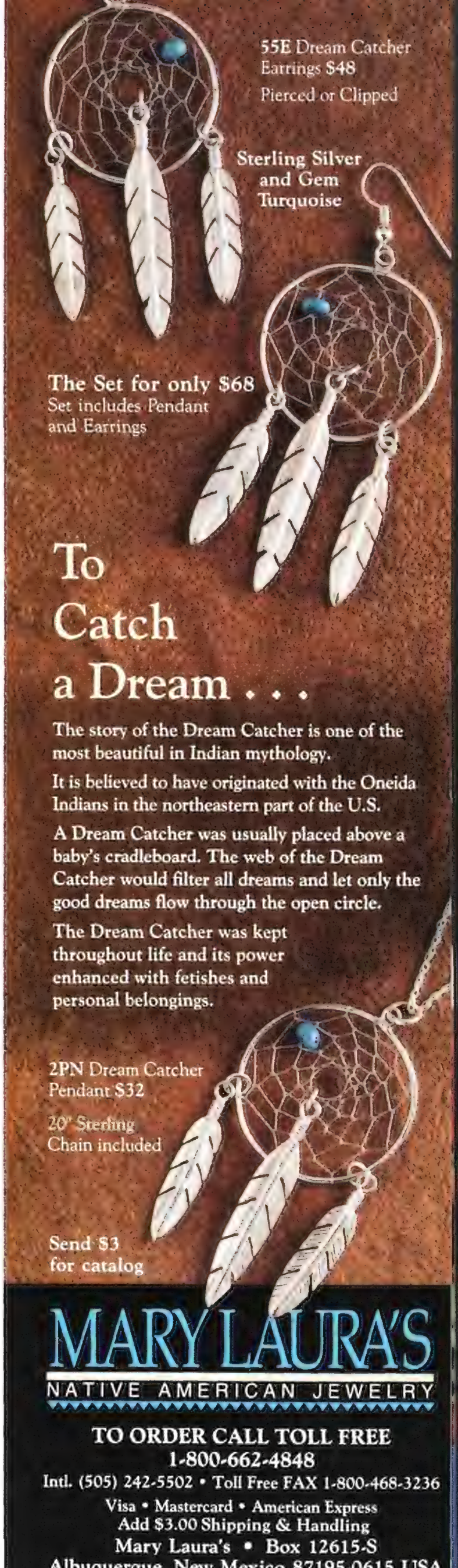
Within a few years Lea opened military training schools for young Chinese in several American cities. The purpose was to supply revolutionary cadres to infiltrate the Manchu armies. Most of the cadets were American-born, but some were smuggled in from China. More than 2,000 were trained, mostly by former American officers and noncoms.

In the 1960s, documents acquired by the Hoover Institution at Stanford University revealed that a few solid American businessmen were also embroiled in Lea's revolutionary schemes. The conspiracy, code-named "Red Dragon," was based on promises that if the revolution were successful, China's new government would provide handsome returns to American financial backers—access to coal mines and precious metals, control of a central bank, railroad and money-coining concessions, shares of customs duties. Lea and his colleagues approached many American prospects, all the way up to J. P. Morgan himself, for the most part without success. "I am ready to do business with any established government," the great financier told them, "but I cannot help to make a government to do business with."

Lea's poor eyesight made writing difficult, so he wound up dictating letters and manuscripts to Ethel Powers, a young woman who had come to Los Angeles from Tennessee to find work. His first book, published in 1908, was *The Vermilion Pencil*, a romantic, bloody and evocative novel about China. The next year, *The Valor of Ignorance*, the first volume in a planned trilogy about global warfare, came out. It combined objective analysis of the forces that were building toward a war between the United States and Japan with a passionate indictment of America's nonchalance in the face of that prospect.

Lea pointed out that the United States, having annexed Hawaii and the Philippines, was lax and complacent about the holdings. It was ignoring the threat from other powers, notably Japan with its nationalism and well-armed military. America was also provoking the Japanese here at home with laws that excluded Orientals and with

Lea recruited and trained a "Chinese Imperial Reform Army" and hired Sgt. Ansel O'Banion (in white shirt) to drill volunteers outside Los Angeles in 1905.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racial slights that led to the "yellow peril" hysteria. "This Republic and Japan," Lea wrote, are approaching "that point of contact which is war."

He argued that Japan's first step to empire—like that of another island-nation, Great Britain, centuries earlier—lay in naval power. Hence, Japan would have to establish a network of naval bases throughout the Pacific. This strategic imperative, encouraged by passive U.S. reliance on various "impregnable" forts it had constructed to protect its own far-flung bases—"dream castles," Lea called them—would entail Japanese attacks on Hawaii, the Philippines and Alaska. Lea accurately predicted that Japan would capture Manila, after landing in Luzon's Lingayen Gulf, and that the city would fall in about three weeks. (The actual capture, following the anticipated route 32 years later, took 26 days!)

In the likely event that Japan's Pacific campaign proved successful, Lea thought it would follow with an invasion of the American mainland. In foretelling Japan's strategy, Lea spent seven months painfully tramping around California's mountains and deserts, often with only a burro for a companion, surviving on raisins, grapefruit, sweet chocolate, whisky and a few canned goods. From these expeditions, he worked out detailed contour maps showing likely Japanese invasion routes and possible American precautions. He concluded that the existing defenses of the West Coast, largely coastal artillery batteries, were useless.

The Valor of Ignorance created a sensation in military circles and eventually influenced U.S. Pacific strategy. It was still being discussed by American military planners in 1941 when the Japanese finally carried out the promised attack on the Hawaiian Islands. After reading the book in galley form, Lea's friend Gen. Adna Chaffee, a retired U.S. Army Chief of Staff, wrote an enthusiastic foreword.

Another fan was Great Britain's Field Marshal Lord Roberts, who bought up all the copies of *Valor* he could lay his

hands on, dispensing them to friends in high places. Lord Roberts struck up a correspondence with Lea, urging him to come look at Britain's geomilitary situation with the same unsparing frankness. Lenin kept a copy of *Valor* on his desk and commented to his biographer, Valeriu Marcu, "this book will someday be studied by thousands of people." Predictably, Lea's old private friend and public enemy, David Starr Jordan, was appalled. In a biting letter in a pacifist pamphlet, Jordan described the book as "worthless" and perhaps "mischievious." It "represents the old military theory of the times of Napoleon, of which Lea has been a persistent student, and it neglects moral and financial values."

In late 1911, as the Chinese revolution was coming to a head, Lea completed *The Day of the Saxon.* It foretold the imminent collapse of the British Empire, for more than a century the globe's dominant presence. Behind the collapse, Lea perceived in Britain an overreliance on naval power in the emerging era of land transportation, and the same complacency in the face of militant challengers that America suffered. Britain's challengers were Germany, Japan and Russia, with Germany being the first to throw down the gauntlet. "One war if the [British] Empire is destroyed," he chillingly predicted, "a series if it is victorious."

Lea's books made their deepest impact in Japan and Germany. A Japanese translation of *The Valor of Ignorance* sold some 84,000 copies in its first three months. Accepted as gospel among many of Japan's militarists, it seemingly formed the core of that country's Pacific strategy during World War II. Lea signed over the profits from the Japanese edition to Sun Yat-sen's revolution.

The Germans and Japanese particularly resonated to Lea's proposition that nations don't behave arbitrarily or in response to chance or to leaders' whims but in obedience to abiding "laws" akin to the laws of economics: "The boundaries of political units are

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For all the clinical detachment of his books, Lea's language leans to the romantic and orotund, and rings with Shakespearean imagery—powerful and moving at best, though often overblown. He felt in his bones the entire sweep of the international drama—the diminishing world-space brought on by transportation; the aggressive energies of racial chauvinism; the impersonal brutality of technological war; the accumulating tension of empires steaming headlong on converging courses of national interest; the pathos of smaller nations caught helpless in imperial paths.

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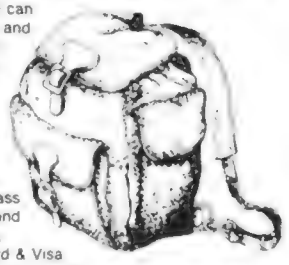

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Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, the Balkans, Persia and Afghanistan."

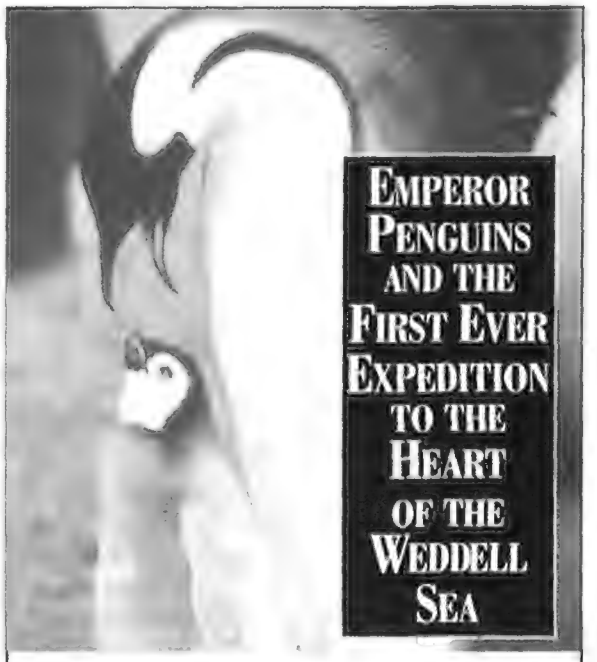
The final volume of the trilogy, *The Swarming of the Slav*, was never written. Some of its intended themes, however, were foreshadowed in *The Day of the Saxon*, which Lea hurried to completion as the Chinese revolution was coming to a head and his own health failing. Lea predicted that if Britain and America were to emerge victorious from their wars with Germany and Japan, they would have to confront Russia.

He was highly skeptical about democracy. To win elections, he said, politicians generally place the short-term desires of ill-informed constituents over the long-term national interests. "As the power of the populace increases," went one of Lea's laws, "the wisdom of its statesmen, who concern themselves with external affairs, decreases proportionately."

In the 1920s Karl Haushofer, who would become Nazi Germany's resident philosopher, promoting the idea of Germany's need for *Lebensraum*, borrowed from Lea in the field of geopolitics. Haushofer adopted the same global perspective, the same view of war as the normal pursuit of mankind, the same economic determinism. Even the Nazi concept of a Pan-European "heartland" as Germany's proper empire seemed to echo Lea's belief that new modes of transport had made land armies more significant than sea power for empire building.

Meanwhile, Sun was desperately trying to stall his impatient revolutionary colleagues in China. Lea and Sun first planned the uprising to begin in June 1912, when necessary money and arms were to be in hand and necessary bribes disbursed. But on October 9, 1911, a cache of the revolutionists' bombs accidentally went off in Hankow. In the ensuing turmoil, some government troops took the opportunity to mutiny, and revolutionary leaders on the scene were forced to go ahead with their revolt.

Lea had just married Ethel Powers, after growing increasingly dependent



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on her eyes and her emotional support. She not only read to him and wrote for him but was the only person allowed to see the little general drop his air of swagger and bluff. They were in Germany, where he watched German Army maneuvers while sitting with the Kaiser, when word came of the rebellion in China. Back in the United States, Sun Yat-sen received cables begging him to take over the movement–and bring money to finance it. Lea and Ethel went to London, where Sun joined them. Ethel exuberantly wrote to her sister, "Sun is going to make him Chief of Staff & he is wild with delight." After a flurry of last-ditch efforts to secure British and American support, Sun, Homer and Ethel sailed for China. By the time they arrived, in December, much of southern China was under revolutionary control.

On January 1, 1912, Sun was inaugurated as the provisional president of the newly formed republic. Observers noted that during the ceremonies, Lea generally attracted more attention and publicity than Sun himself. The two set about trying to negotiate the departure of the Manchus, who still controlled the northern provinces. The revolutionaries were also in desperate need of money and recognition from foreign governments.

Several historians have written that Lea's presence contaminated Sun's cause. American and British diplomats were put off by his vainglorious style and occasional deviousness. Their dislike brought Sun Yat-sen's judgment into disrepute. Western governments favored Yuan Shih-k'ai, a commander of the Manchu Army who assured them he could negotiate the Manchus' surrender and install a republican government. Caring little about who was actually president so long as the fledgling republic survived, Sun Yat-sen graciously resigned in Yuan's favor after holding power for only three months.

On the eve of Sun's abdication, Lea suffered a paralyzing stroke. Under Ethel's care, he returned to Los Angeles in May 1912 and lingered in ill-

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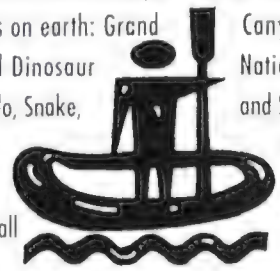

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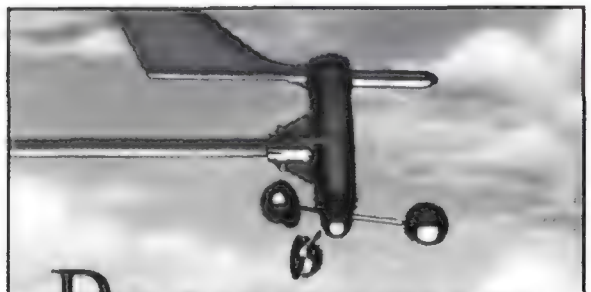

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health until his death on November 1, two weeks before his 36th birthday. His vision of a republican China allied with the West was doomed. Once in power, Yuan Shih-k'ai ignored the new constitution and dismissed or murdered his political opponents. China lapsed further into chaos, prey to rival warlords and greedy foreign powers.

Sun eventually regained the leadership of China and spent futile years beseeching Western powers for support. Finally, in 1922, he turned reluctantly to the Russians, who proved only too eager to help. Communist agents were admitted to his government, setting the stage for the eventual takeover. Years before, Homer Lea had warned that Russia's involvement in China would damage the interests of the West as well as China's.

Lea had boldly predicted how things were going to unfold. Yet for all his attempts to ape the indomitable public air of his god, Napoleon, the strange little man had once written plaintively and prophetically to Ethel, "Everything I lean on breaks; every hope I conjecture up vanishes before the realities of each new day."

Celebrated by some historians and ridiculed by others, Lea took delight in parading around in a great cape and military uniform of his own design.

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Additional reading

Smithsonian horizons (p. 10)

"Looting, theft and smuggling: A report to the President and the Congress" by the Cultural Property Advisory Committee 1983-1993, U.S. Information Agency, 1993

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Agora (p. 38)

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Answers for the "School of . . ." quiz on pages 100-01:

A Edgar Degas
B John Singer Sargent
C Jean-Antoine Watteau
D Edward Hopper
E Jan Vermeer
F Diego Velázquez

Source: Forbes Subscriber Study, Don Bowdren Associates 1990. FYI is a supplement to Forbes

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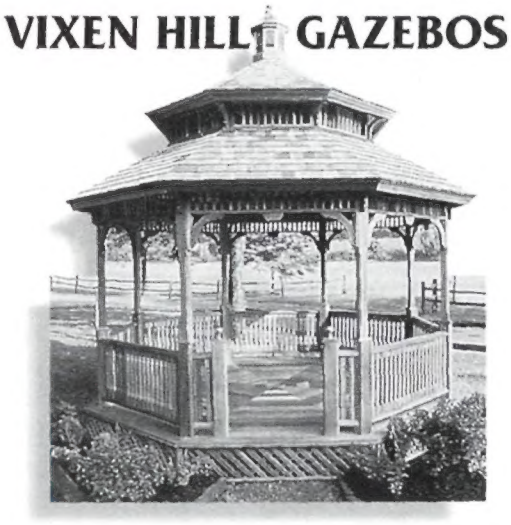

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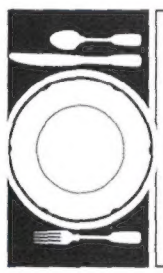

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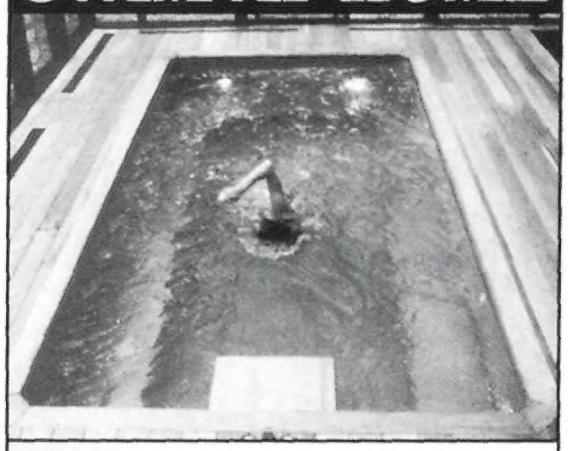

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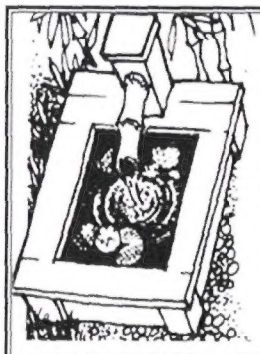

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By Bruce Watson

The topic for today: How much more talk radio can you take?

I used to vote only once a year, but now I vote early and often–with my mouth. Whenever there's something on the nation's mind, I turn on the radio, tune in the conversation of democracy and call up to get my own 2 cents' worth in.

"I'm not pro-anything or anti-anything, Gene. I'm just a regular guy. But hey, that's what's wrong with this country. Nobody listens anymore."

"Well, we listen, pal. Thanks for your call. The phone lines are full here on WINE-AM 660. Frank from Indianapolis. What do you think, Frank? Should the President get another Hollywood haircut?"

"Hello? Hel . . . am I on the air?"

My talk radio habit started almost as soon as I could talk. Back before 800-numbers, when talk radio was just a few local voices crying in the AM wilderness, I was all ears. Now that the whole country is gabbing, talk radio is my soapbox, my suggestion box, my ballot box.

"Turn down your radio, Frank. That's better. You're on Whine Radio, whining today about the President's hair. Should he get a Hollywood cut? A trim, at least?"

"Well, Gene, as president of the American Barber Board, I think I speak for tonsorial engineers everywhere in saying . . ."

I hadn't yet formed an opinion on Hairgate, so I tuned my dial to another political party line. "If you just joined us, we're talking about Congress. Who gave Congress the right to make laws? I mean, where do these jerks get off telling us what to do? Are you MAD about it? YOU CAN BET I AM! I'M SHOUTING MAD! 1-800-SHOUTIT IS THE NUMBER! GIVE US A CALL! FRANK FROM INDIANAPOLIS, YOU'RE ON SHOUT RADIO! WHAT DO . . ."

When our Founding Fathers met to talk about a constitution, they shouted and whined a little, but they envisioned democracy as a civilized conversation, citizens calmly talking over events. In actual practice, the conversation never was all that civil, but by now–thanks to the intercession of talk radio–it has deteriorated to the point where it manifests all the logic and maturity of kids chatting on a playground. "Hey, I saw a whale on TV last night." "Big deal, my mom's gonna get me a bike." "So who cares, I cut my knee wicked bad." "Oh yeah, well my Congressman can beat up your Congressman any day!"

On talk radio, comment follows non sequitur follows innuendo, with background hum provided by our Founding Fathers spinning in their graves. Fortunately, my thoughts always put the issue in perspective. Somewhere in this government of the talk show, by the talk show, for the talk show, I can always find a phone bank that needs my wise counsel.

". . . elcome back to WIND, your Weathertalk station. We're talking today about fog. Is there too much fog in America? Are we in the midst of a fog crisis? What can we taxpayers do? Your calls can help put a bill before our nation's lawmakers, a bill mandating fog-free zones in every state. Should we send Congress a message? What do you think? Next caller–Frank from . . ."

The other night, determined to talk about more than the weather, I gripped my radio dial and set off on an armchair journey across the airwaves. I listened to "BBQ-Banter," where backyard chefs discussed their favorite sauce recipes. I tuned in a Hockeytalk network, then found talk shows hosted by acupuncturists, locksmiths and shepherds. I skimmed past "He-Talk," "She-Talk" and "Tower of Babble–America's First Talk Show for Toddlers." On "Phil's Phones," the President himself had called to say that his advisers were studying the haircut issue. Farther down the dial, three Senators explained their mall-shopping strategies on "Shoptalk–all shopping, all the time." On "Relationships with Ruth," the wife of a bungee jumper was promoting her book, *Stretch and Me.* Talk, talk, talk. Nearing the end of the dial, I had just one more chance.

". . . sure, Russ, it's easy to bad-mouth the President on this Hairgate thing. But what about Lincoln?"

"I give up. What about Lincoln?"

"It's a little-known fact that during the Civil War, Lincoln let his hair grow down to his knees! So what's the big deal?"

"Good point, Frank. Thanks for your call. Speaking of Lincoln, I'll bet you didn't know he was our only alien President. Yep, Honest Abe was from Mars. Used to buzz Civil War battlefields in his UFO. You can look it up. You're listening to WLIE, Lie Radio. All lies, all the time. 1-800-NOTRUTH is the number. The lines are open. Give us a call."

Now they were talking my language. No pretense, no pomp, just bald-faced lies. I grabbed the phone. I had to wait ten minutes for my turn, but I learned a lot on WLIE. I never knew that we taxpayers cough up $32 billion a year in Congressional barber fees. And the Hair Depletion Allowance for men with receding hairlines! Where will it end?

"Hey, WLIE talkers! Spread the word! In the last two hours, your calls have defeated three proposed tax hikes, sent the President to his barber and turned lying into a spectator sport. You are democracy. Hello, Bruce from Massachusetts. What outright lie do you have for us?"

My turn! My 2 cents! The whole nation was listening! "Right, Russ, I just wanna say that Lincoln never . . ."

"Hey, hate to cut you off, but we got news coming up. Call again sometime. You're tuned to Lie Radio. More after the top of the hour. Now these headlines."

"WASHINGTON–Responding to overwhelming public outcry, Congress today took up a bill to create fog-free zones across the nation. For details . . ."

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